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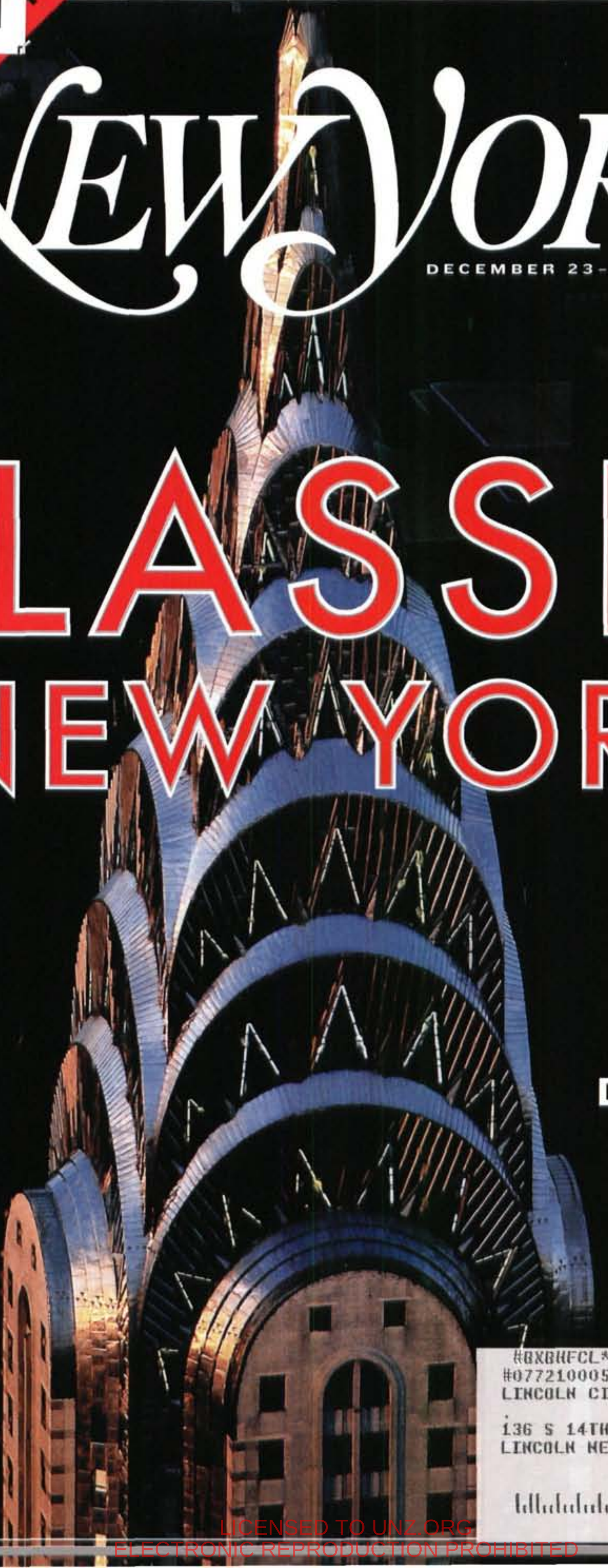

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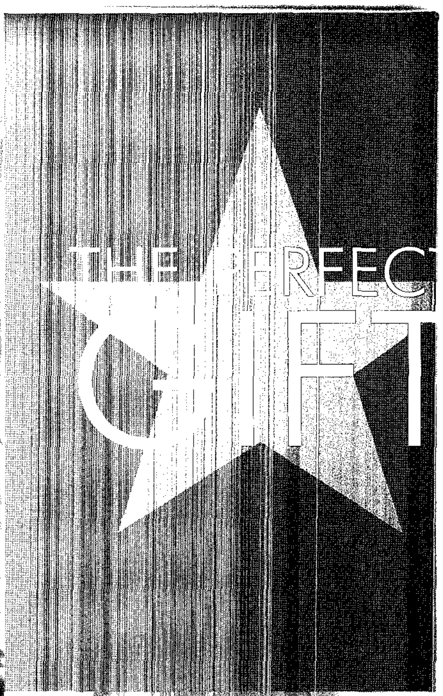
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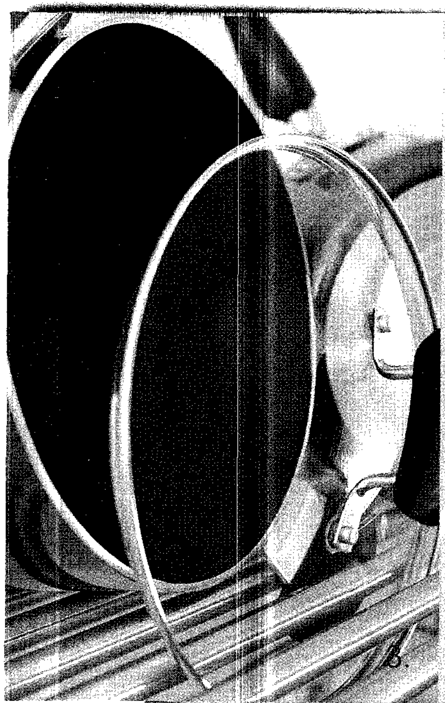

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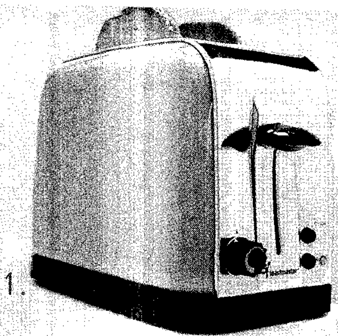
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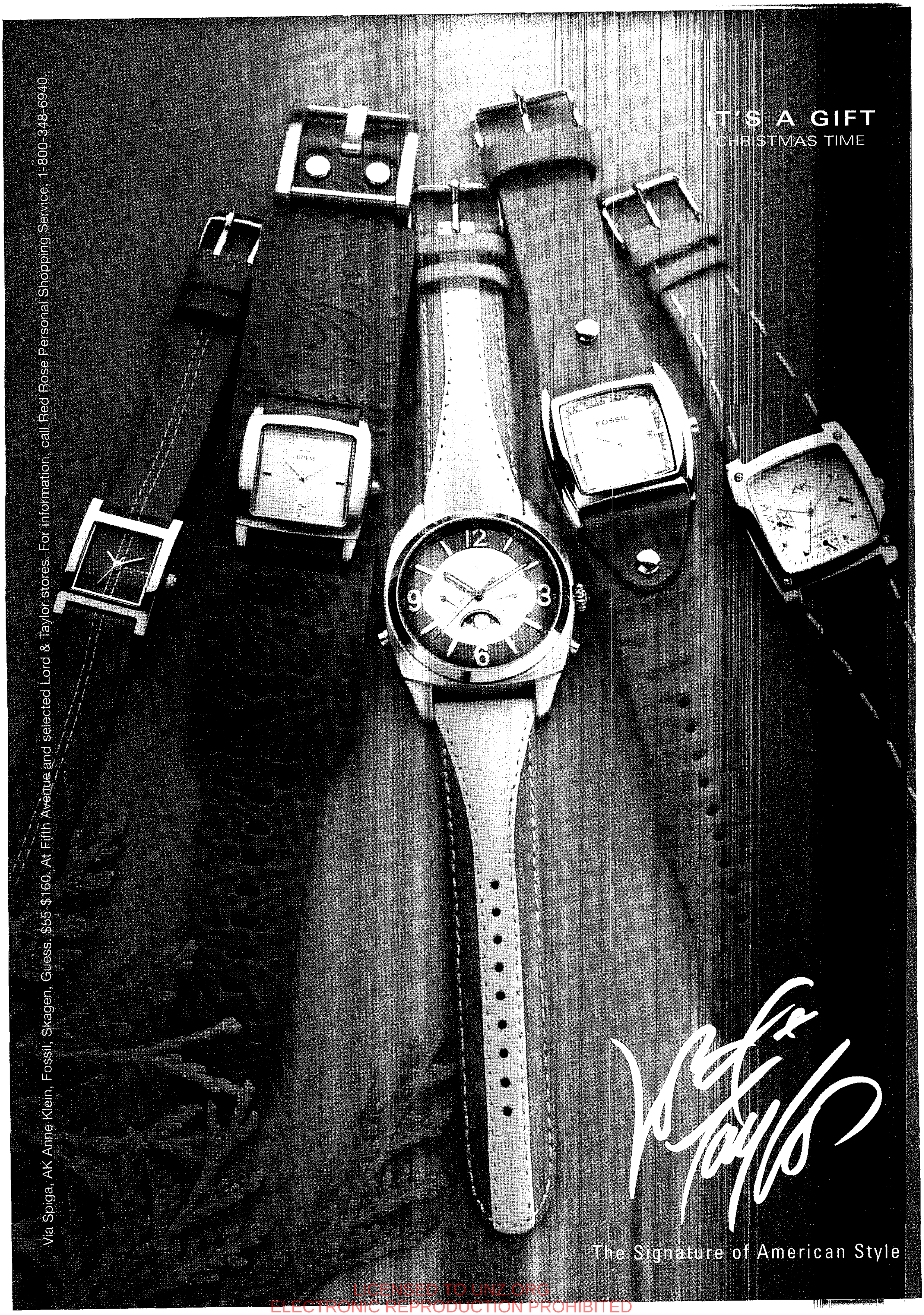
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AND THE WINNERS ARE . . . Clockwise from top left, Eliot Spitzer, Julianne Moore, Herman Edwards, and Harvey Fierstein.

41 New York Awards 2002

During the past year, while still licking our wounds, we began to get back to typical form, which was, typically, outstanding. For our New York Awards, there was plenty to celebrate. Eliot Spitzer spearheaded a crusade against corporate corruption. *Saturday Night Live*'s Tina Fey crowned herself queen of the New York one-liner. The Jets' Herman Edwards showed there's no better time to think about getting on top than when your team's on the bottom. And there are seven others where those came from. As for lifetime achievement, we couldn't resist saluting Twyla Tharp and Billy Joel, whose sensational Broadway collaboration reminded us that there are brilliant second—and third, and fourth—acts in New York life.

55 Classic New York

The city—we knew it before, but never more so than in the past year—is more than its skyline. We explore its DNA: the Ur-New Yorkers (the Grande Dame, the Single Girl, the Agitator) and the institutions (the department store, the power lunch, the bodega), along with the songs and movies, and even the, er, colorful hand gestures (see for yourself: page 68) that define, for better and sometimes for worse, *our* city, *our* way of life.

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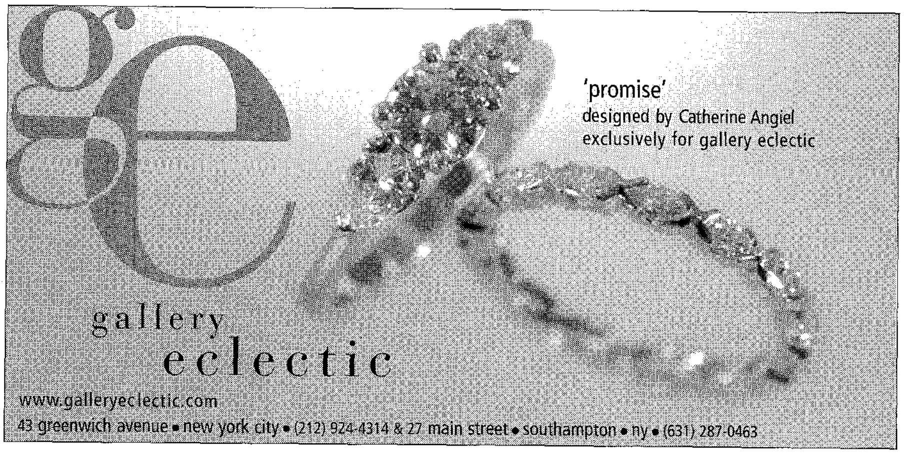

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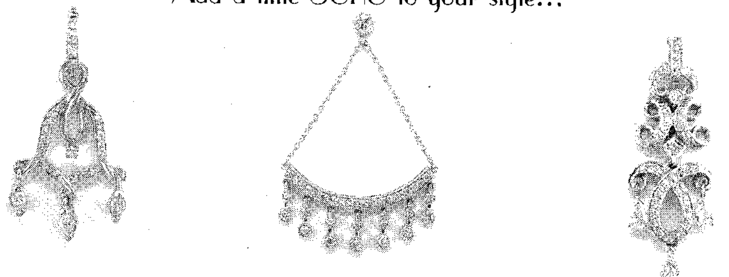

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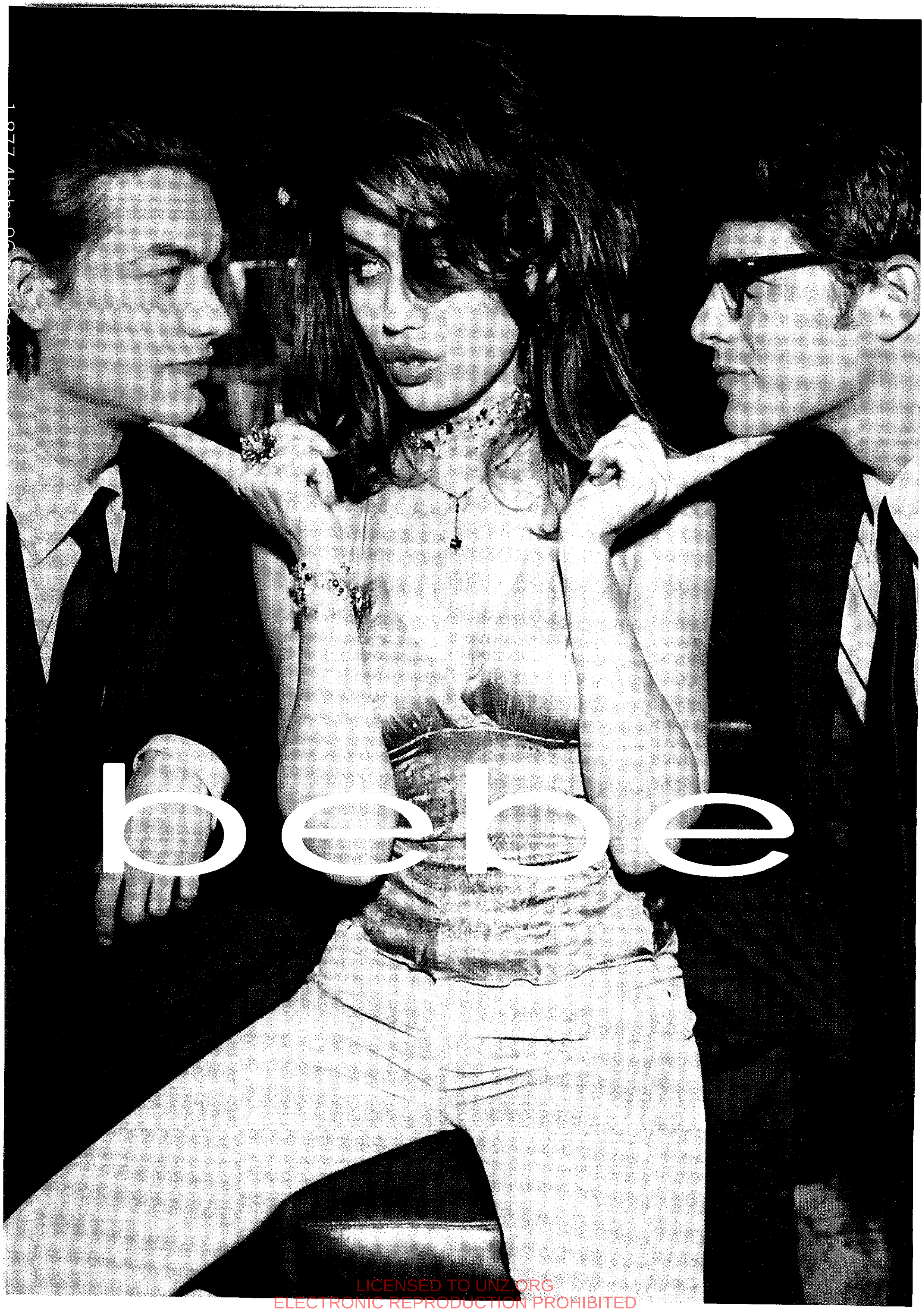
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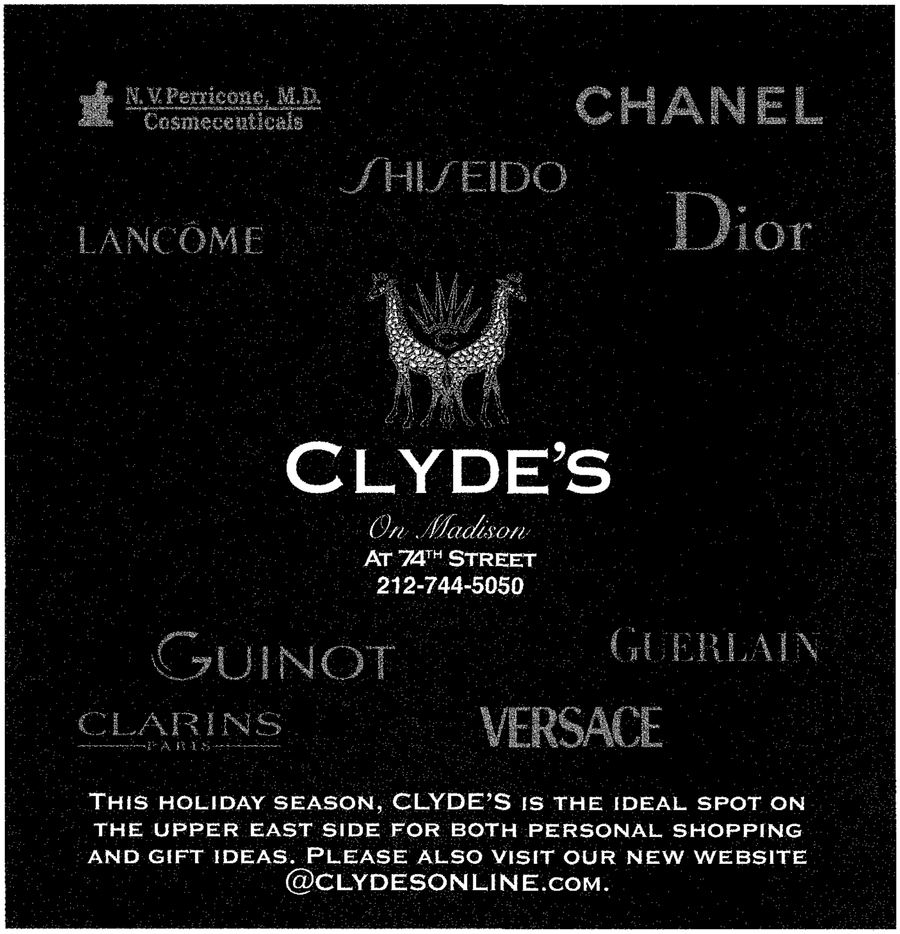
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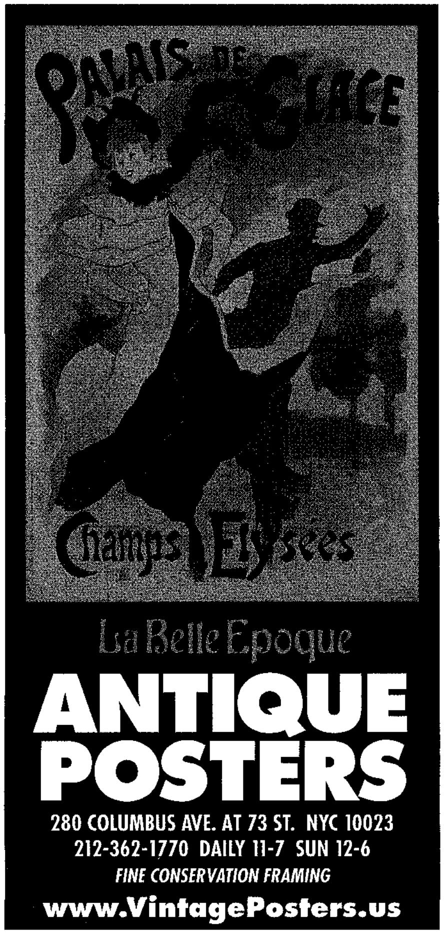

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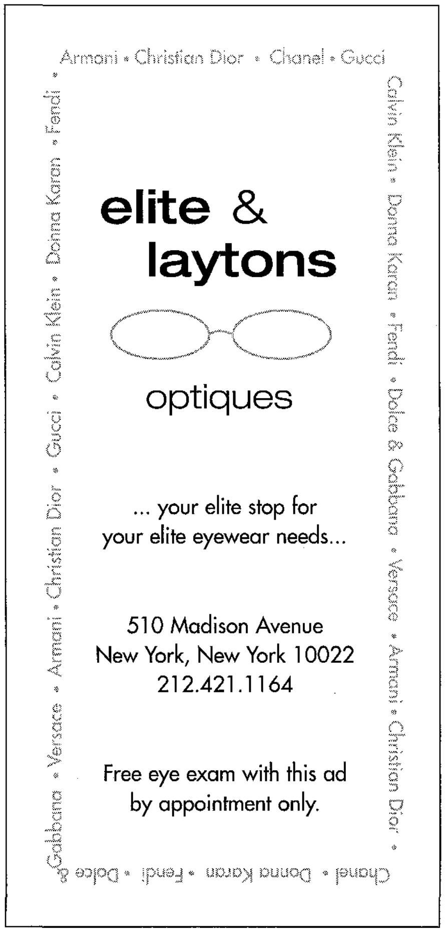
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Letters

Behind the Velvet Jump Rope

Thanks for "The Price of Perfection" [by Michael Wolff, December 2]. My husband and I are the parents of a 6-month-old son, and we've been struggling with the question of what to do about preschool (yeah, we've been told you have to start worrying early). The idea of moving out of the city has come up, but we were ambivalent. We're not anymore. We're outta here.

Geri Clark, MANHATTAN

"The Price of Perfection" explains why Wall Street is in such sad, scandal-ridden shape. Jack Grubman and his other financier buddies are the men who manage this nation's money. These are the same guys who told us to buy pricey tech stocks, and the overrated value they give these preschools certainly explains why they are so easily manipulated into thinking something as simple as learning how to read and get along with your peers is worth such back-room dealing. The last time I checked, 2+2=4. Apparently, to these deluded parents who drive the American economy, 2+2=$14,000 a year. I think I'll go make sure my broker went to public school.

Jennifer Reed, MANHATTAN

In Italy, the best preschools are public. It makes sense: Learning that you cannot buy everything in life should be the first lesson for new parents and their kids.

Francesca Forcella, MANHATTAN

How fitting that I received the *New York* Magazine issue with Michael Wolff's "The Price of Perfection" the week of Thanksgiving. Am I ever so thankful that I in no way identify with those parents!

Kate Hickey, SUFFERN, N.Y.

Sometimes New York *Magazine* is better at exploring obscure cultures than *National Geographic* is. My latest wonderment was caused by Michael Wolff's article about parental preschool angst. Outside of New York, this is viewed as pathological. I hope this illness remains contained.

Janice Bernstein, SARASOTA, FLA.

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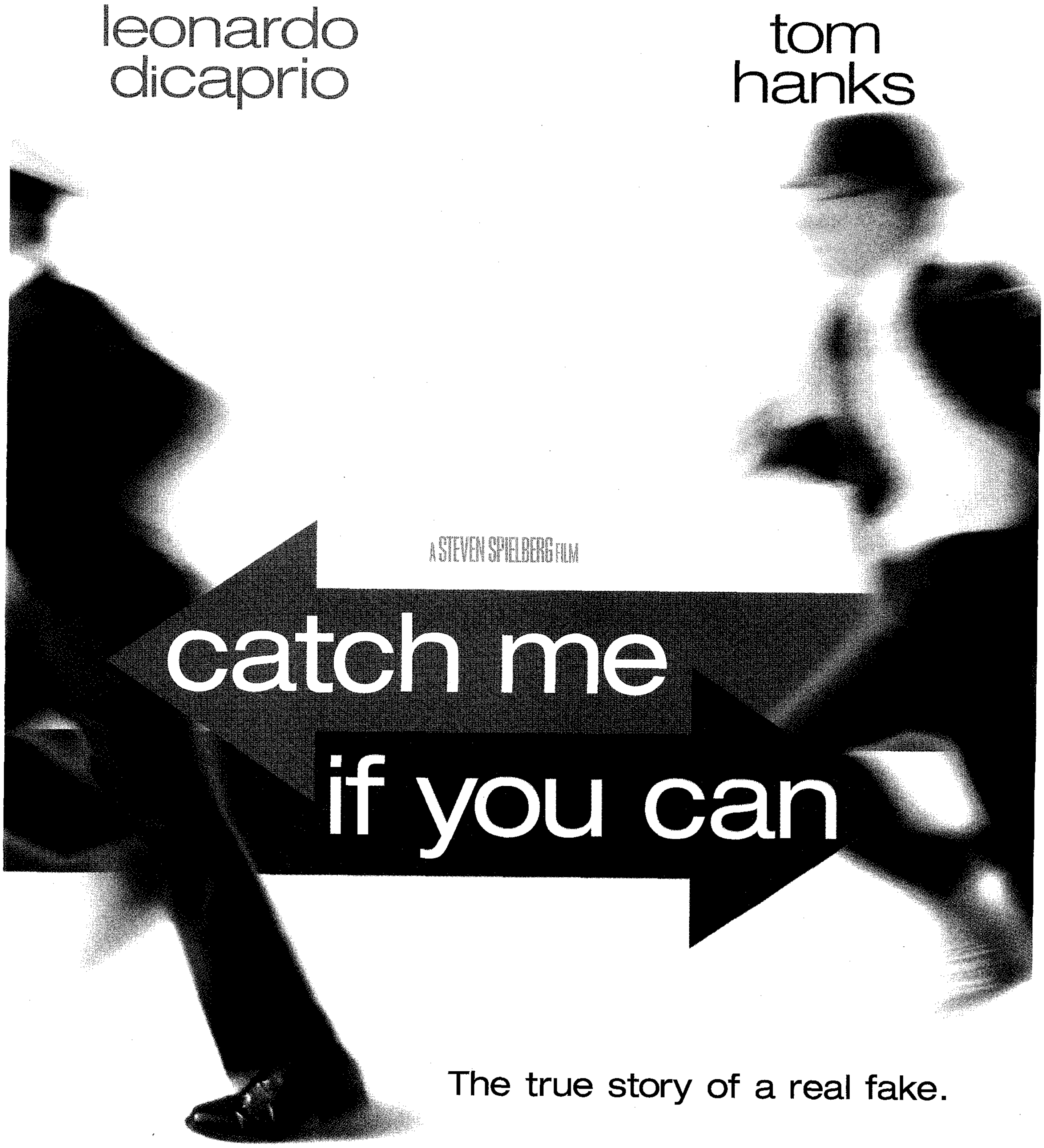

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LETTERS

Applause for "The Price of Perfection." Mr. Wolff's piece provides a personal perspective that adds meaningful depth to your survey of preschools. What a shame that Robert Kolker's "Inside the Sandbox" [December 2] squanders the opportunity to provide useful, helpful, fact-based information that might actually help families manage the overwhelming private-nursery-school admissions challenge.

Ken Cohen, MANHATTAN

"Inside the Sandbox" fails to mention any public schools. With the development of charter schools, magnet schools, and other specialized learning centers, parents of young children should be made aware of these educational opportunities. It would have been more helpful to compare the teacher credentials of public and private schools.

Gregory Green, MANHATTAN

While we realize that your roundup of New York nursery schools was meant to be more of a snarky status index than a sincerely intentioned public-service guide, we're nevertheless angered by your facile treatment of First Presbyterian Church Nursery School in Greenwich Village. Rather than quoting anyone actually involved in the school as a parent, teacher, or administrator, your reporter relied on the impressions of a mother who merely took a tour of FPCNS. How about calling some of the dozens of parents and alums who love the place? We appreciate *New York* for skewering those New Yorkers who deserve to be skewered, but the last people you should be picking on are early-childhood educators who do their job well.

David Kamp and Aimee Bell, MANHATTAN

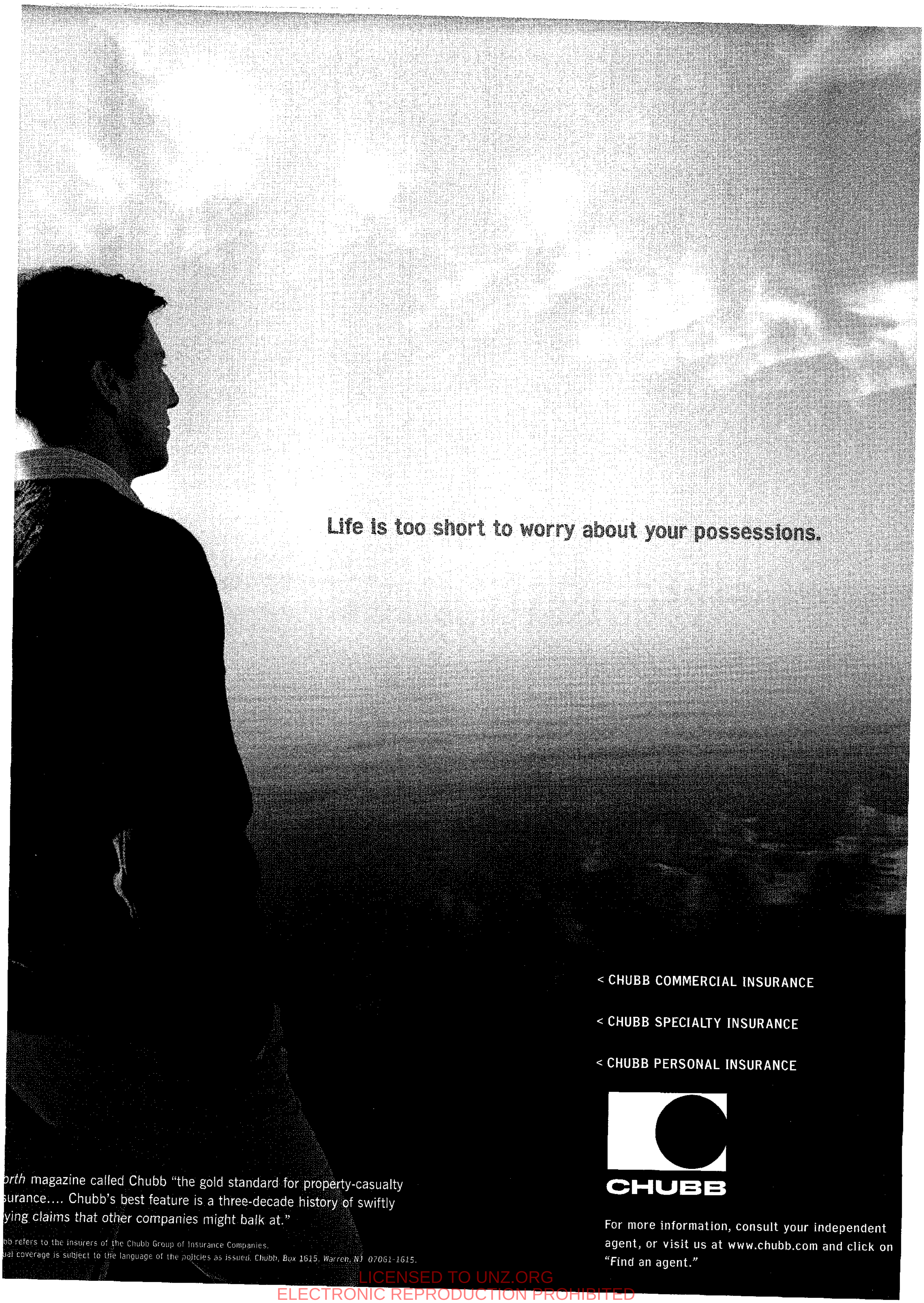
Since both of my children went to Harvard, together with classmates of theirs from City and County School, I was startled by the quote in "Inside the Sandbox" that "It's not for people who are concerned about getting their kids into Harvard."

George A. Davidson, MANHATTAN

Shame, Sadness, Suicide

Tragically for his young twins and the rest of his grieving family, Jeffrey Silverman, like many of today's elite, chose to live large in a Potemkin village ["The Man Who Had Everything," by Beth Landman Keil, December 2]. When the trappings of his financial success were about to disappear, he could find no escape from the shame except the one that forced him to exit life.

Lysa Domingues, MANHATTAN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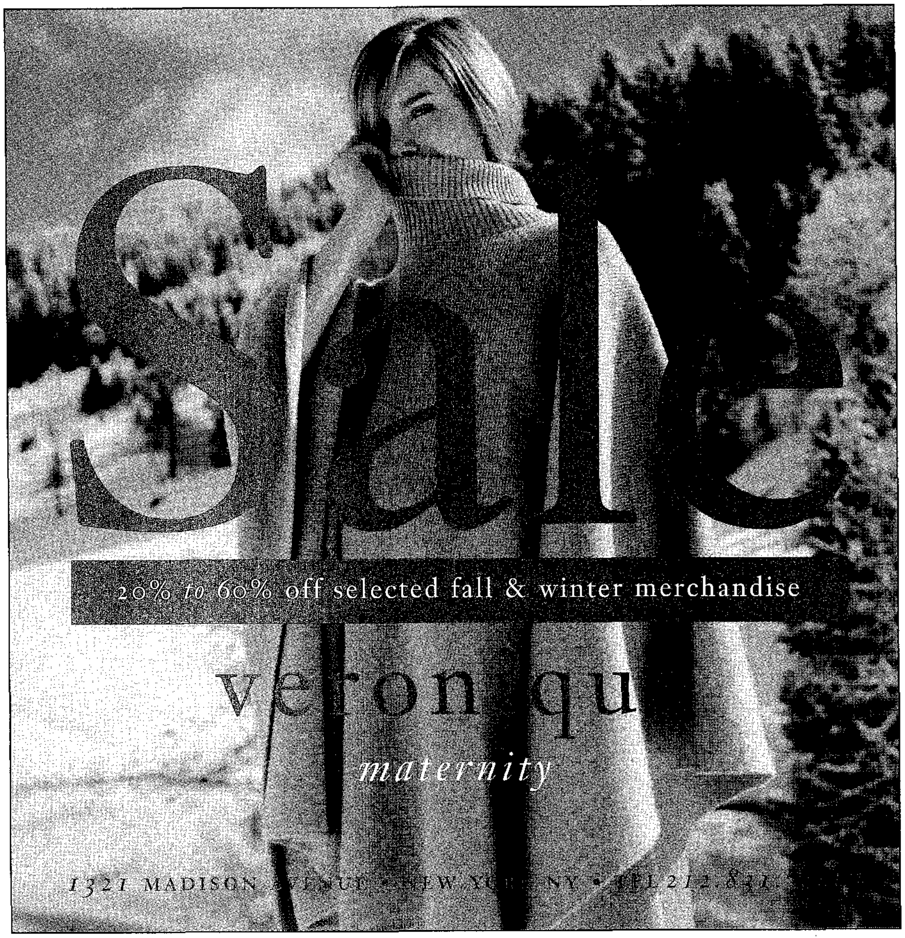
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LETTERS

Sad story on Jeffrey Silverman. Which preschool did he attend?

Cecilia Campa, PORTLAND, ORE.

Senior's Senator

I was thrilled to read the article on Jesse Helms ["Oldest Living Confederate Senator Tells All," by Jennifer Senior, December 2], not simply because I am a born-and-bred North Carolinian but because it was so well written. Even though I seldom agree with him, how refreshing to read a tribute to a man who has shaped the face of national politics, for better or for worse, for half a century. Jennifer Senior is to be commended for taking a decidedly nonpartisan tone in an otherwise politically charged debate about his relevance in history. In the voice of the South, "Thank y'all for doin' a good job."

Jennifer McCormick, LENOIR, N.C.

As a Southerner and a Southern Baptist, I take issue with Jesse Helms's being the representative of anything remotely associated with true Christian virtues. His deliberately divisive, inflammatory, and obstructionist actions have done more real harm to more innocent people than any other living politician. "Love the sinner, hate the sin" is the creed of every holier-than-thou Christian hypocrite (and when Mr. Helms walks on water, I'll gladly recant that statement).

William Silbert, SAN ANTONIO, TEX.

While I enjoyed Jennifer Senior's article on Senator Helms, I was struck by a couple of things. First, it's almost a truism that the more charming a southern Republican pol, the more distasteful and downright unpleasant his politics will be. Second, imagine what the U.S. would be like today if Helms and his ilk had had their way in everything. We would have an apartheid state. Many women would die every year from botched abortions. Homosexuals would live in terror of discovery and probable prison sentences. All of which is exactly what a lot of Helms's supporters would like.

Christopher Rowley, ELLENVILLE, N.Y.

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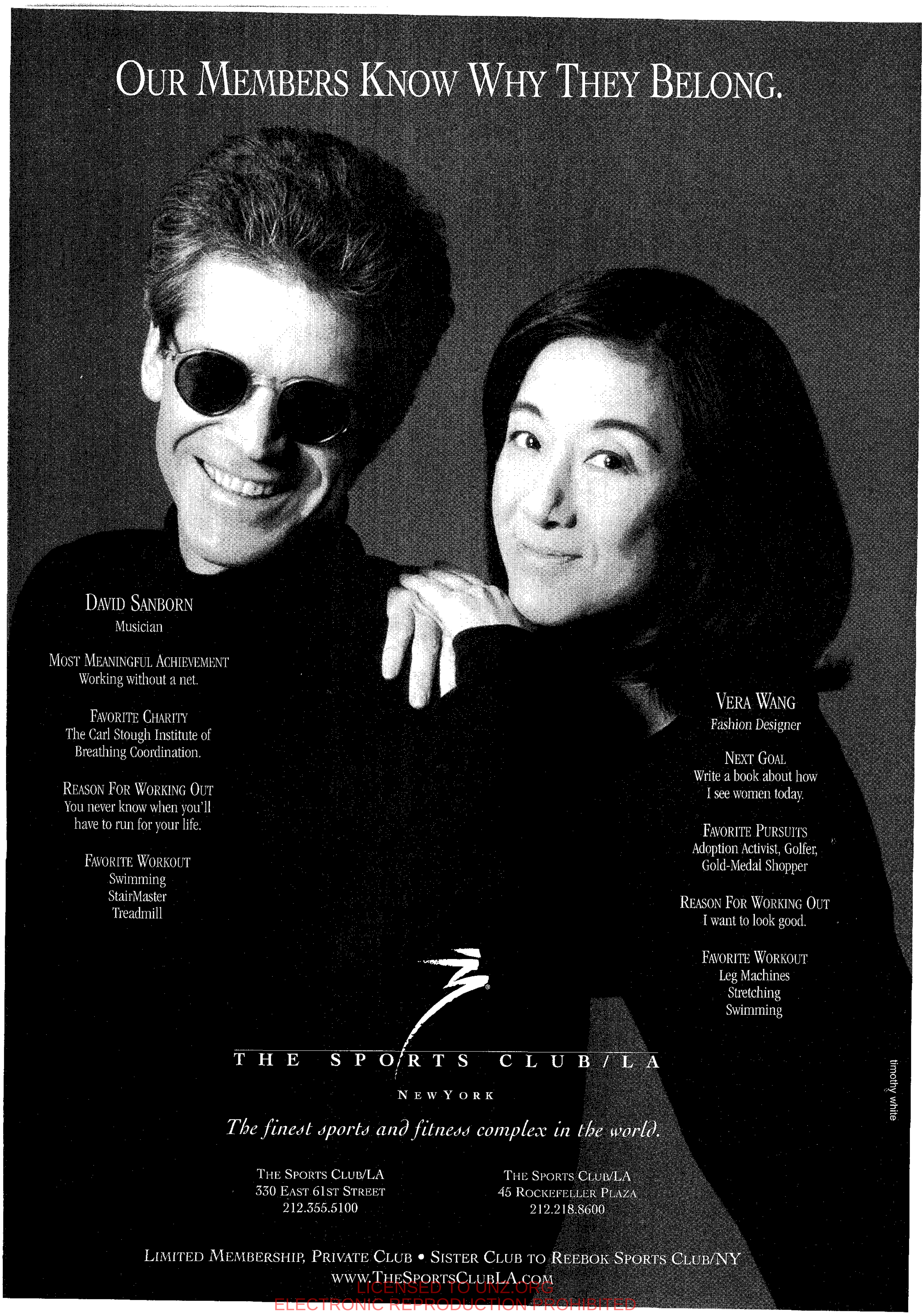

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FAVORITE WORKOUT
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VERA WANG
Fashion Designer

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I see women today.

FAVORITE PURSUITS
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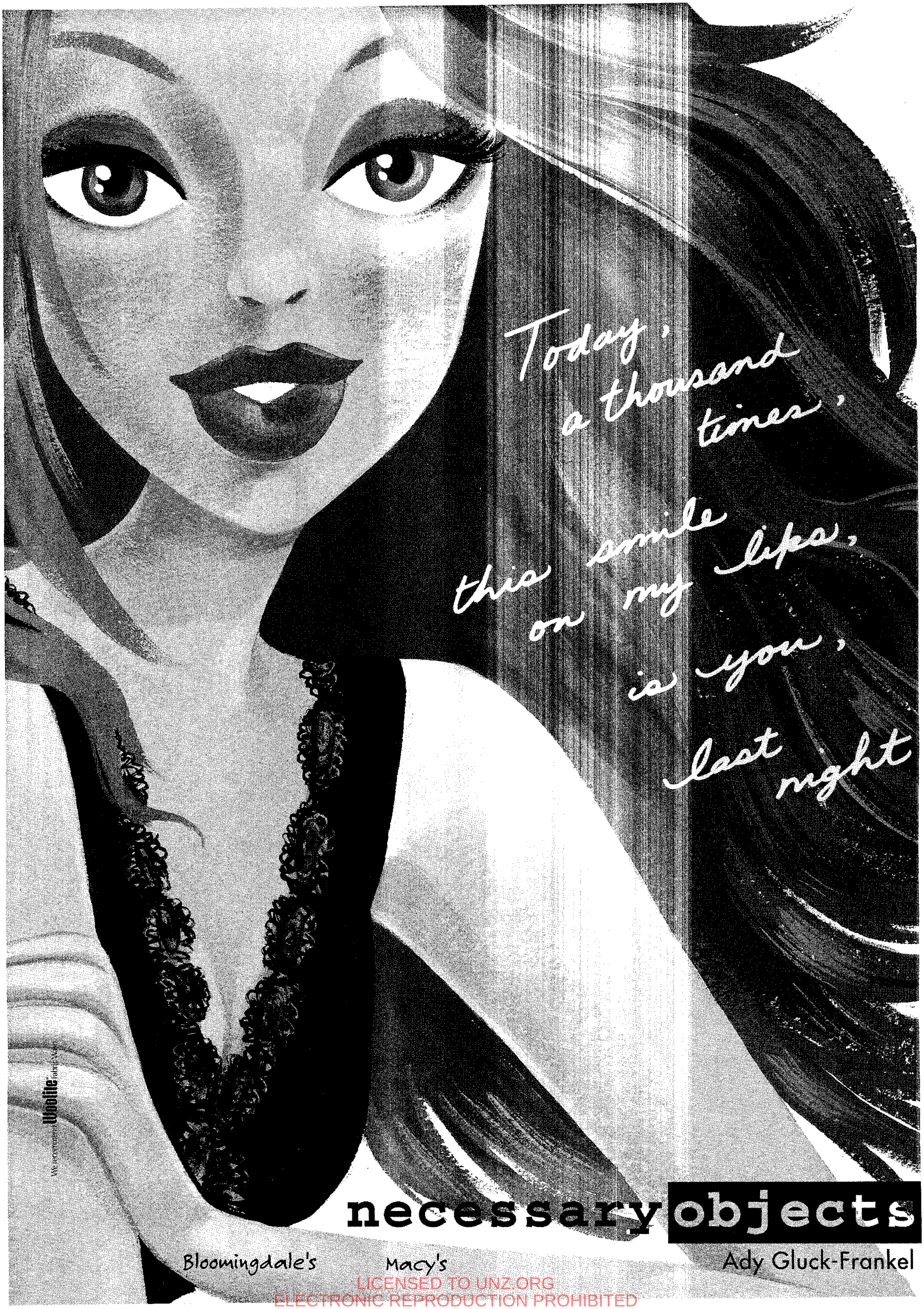
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Intelligencer

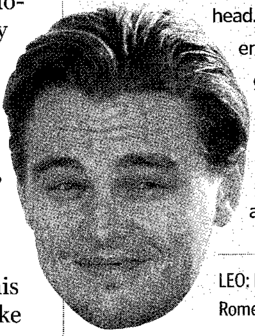
By Marc S. Malkin

Guns N' Roses Guitarist Can't Kick the Bucket

The Guns N' Roses tour may have been canceled last week because **Axl Rose** was a no-show at the group's Philly concert, but Rose isn't the only band member who's been acting strangely. Backstage at Madison Square Garden, after the tour's now-final concert, eccentric guitarist **Buckethead**—who wears a KFC bucket on his head and a Halloween-like white plastic face mask—was having a hard time getting out of character. "**Chris Rock** was saying what a great show it was," says our informant, "and Buckethead just retreated into the corner and sat there, refusing to take the mask off." After about twenty minutes trying to speak with the masked man, Rock gave up. He was heard muttering on the way out the door that "that guy is freaky, talking to me with his mask on. Why the fuck wouldn't he take it off?" For over an hour afterward, we're told, Buckethead still wouldn't budge. "He was literally hiding behind some lockers," our source continues. "His girlfriend came, and I wouldn't say they were having a fight. I think she was trying to coax him into taking off that mask."

Could Leo and Cameron Be an Item?

Leonardo DiCaprio and **Cameron Diaz**'s coziness with each other last week certainly raised some eyebrows. After leaving the premiere of *La Bohème*, the *Gangs of New York* co-stars made quite an appearance at Dorsea, which was hosting the after-party for Chambord's GreenSky Healing Hands charity dinner at Danube. "Cameron seemed mesmerized by Leo," an onlooker reports. "She was stroking his baseball cap, stroking the hair on the back of his neck. She had her hands all over his head." Though our spy didn't notice any lip-locking, things got steamier later on as the two engaged in some dirty dancing until after 3:30 in the morning. "They were bumping and grinding," the source continues. "She was giving him that sensual, playful, coy look . . . I would think there was something going on between them." And 24 hours later, they continued their nightcrawling with a stop at Suede after the *Gangs* premiere party at the New York Public Library. Another of our spies reports that they were dancing until the wee hours alongside **Naomi Campbell**, **Jimmy Fallon**, **Joey Fatone**, and **Damon Dash**. DiCaprio's rep insisted they're not dating, but cracked, "God, I hope it were so." As for Diaz, she's been dating **Jared Leto** for two years, but her rep declined to comment.



LEO: Playing Romeo again?

CAMERON: Hands-on.

Denis Leary Smokes and Jokes

Michael J. Fox may be a spokesman for Parkinson's disease, but that doesn't stop the irrepressible actor from making jokes about his own predicament. In fact, **Denis Leary** tells us that the two of them had a good laugh when Fox whipped out a pack of cigarettes one day. "I was like, 'What are you doing?' " Leary told us during the recent Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research benefit honoring **Muhammad Ali** at the Metropolitan Pavilion. "And Michael said, 'I can finally smoke again.' " Fox's treatments had made it possible for him to hold cigarettes again. "I mean, it's messed up that he can smoke," Leary said. "But it's messed up in a good way." Meanwhile, Leary said that he, Fox, and hockey legend **Cam Neely** are hosting a casino-night fund-raiser in Boston in February to benefit Fox's organization, Leary's firefighter charity, and Neely's cancer group. **Whoopi Goldberg** warned Leary that he'd better invite her. "Don't forget about the old black lady," she cracked.

Caroline Rhea: Bush Whacker

If **Billy Bush** doesn't start behaving, he's not going to have any access to Hollywood. One of our spies tells us that the *Access Hollywood* correspondent and **Caroline Rhea** got into quite a tiff at the recent premiere of *Analyze That*. Bush asked Rhea if she had seen **Rosie O'Donnell** and girlfriend **Kelli Carpenter**'s new baby. Rhea responded that she had and that the infant was beautiful. Bush then made some sort of crack about who the baby looked like—O'Donnell or Carpenter. Rhea wasn't amused and started teasing Bush about being a part of the First Family (his cousin is **George W.**). When Bush couldn't take it anymore, he turned his back on Rhea and said, "Who does she think she is?" Rhea snapped, "Are you dissing me?" and shoved Bush with both hands and continued on her way, spies tell us. A couple of nights later, when Rhea arrived at the premiere of *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, we hear, Bush pretended to take a call on his cell phone when he spotted her. At that point, a producer from a competing entertainment show screamed to Bush, "You're a pussy!" This isn't the first time Bush has rubbed someone the wrong way. As we reported last month, **Edward Norton** refused to talk to him at the *Red Dragon* premiere and called him a jackass.

BILLY BUSH: Family resemblance?

CAROLINE RHEA: Beating the Bush.

PHOTOGRAPHS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, PIC DF/LFI; EVAN AGOSTINI/IMAGEDIRECT; ROBIN PLATZER/TWIN IMAGES; UDIX/LFI.

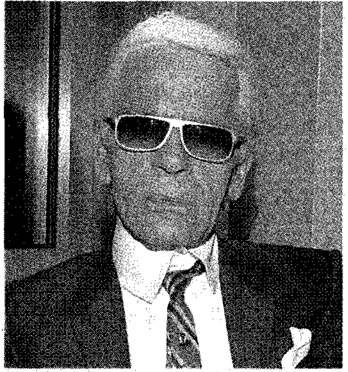
Intelligencer

Leary smiled and said, laughing: “That’s right, isn’t it law that every fund-raiser needs to have at least one old black lady?”

Morgan Bank Is Open All Night

Saturday Night Live star **Tracy Morgan** was recently at Suede, along with **Tyson Beckford** and **Taye Diggs**, when he asked to hear three or four songs, including **Ludacris**’s “Southern Hospitality.” Morgan got so enthused when D.J. **Kid Capri** complied that he literally started throwing money at the crowd. “He stood up on his chair—with a bottle of champagne in each hand and about six more on his table—and screamed, ‘These are the songs I wanted to hear all night!’ ” a reveler reports. “He pulled some money out of his pocket. It looked like about two or three thousand dollars; it was all hundreds. And it just started flying out at the crowd.” Soon, Morgan’s enthusiasm caught on with the D.J. “Kid Capri got so into it that he dug into his pocket and started throwing money also,” our source continues. “I’m not sure how much, but I doubt it was as much as Morgan.”

Tara Subkoff Gets Hopping Mad in Miami . . .



KARL LAGERFELD: Past his bedtime?

It was an unusual scene of usual suspects at the recent Art Basel Miami Beach, the new Miami edition of the annual Swiss art fair. We’re told that Imitation of Christ fashion designer **Tara Subkoff** had talked to gallerist **Jeffrey Deitch**—who represents **Vanessa Beecroft** and Fischerspooner—about showing some of her own artwork at the fair in his booth. But after Deitch rejected her, the fur started to fly. Subkoff released seven rabbits that had signs around their necks reading JEFFREY DEITCH SAID I’M NOT AN ARTIST into the Miami Beach Convention Center. Nevertheless, Subkoff got to show some of her paintings in a show curated by New York gallerist **Kenny Schachter**. Meanwhile, at the Art Basel official opening party hosted by **Craig Robbins** and **Jeffrey Chodorow** at the Miami design district, actor **Stephen Dorff** said he’d be willing to strip for artist-socialite **Anh Duong**. “I mentioned that he might pose nude,” says Duong, “but I think he said he wanted to keep his Speedo on.” Two nights later, guests were looking for **Karl Lagerfeld** at Bed, a restaurant where patrons dine shoeless on beds, for a small dinner hosted by Cologne’s Galerie Gmurzynska in honor of the designer. The dinner was scheduled for 11 P.M., but he didn’t turn up until after midnight. “Everyone was starving, some had already ordered dinner, and **John Waters** lost patience and just left,” says one attendee. “But then Karl arrived, refused to eat there because he didn’t want to take his shoes off, and made everyone get up and go to Nobu.”

Seen and Heard Around Town

Jennifer Lopez dancing with some gal pals during a party her manager, **Benny Medina**, threw for her at the SubMercer, where he decorated the place with four two-by-two-foot mounted photos of his pop princess. **Ben Affleck** sat things out on the sidelines, but when Jenny wasn’t dancing, she sat on his lap and smothered his forehead with kisses. . . . **Angie Harmon** running into her old modeling pal **Drew Riker**—now a contestant on the reality show *The Amazing Race*—at the Hogan store and asking him to help pick out shoes for her hubby, **Jason Sehorn**. . . . Interior decorator to the stars **Jeffrey Bilhuber**—whose clients include **Iman** and **David Bowie**, **Peter Jennings**, and **Anna Wintour**—moving into the City Club (which he also designed) because he hasn’t found a new apartment to buy after recently selling his place in the East Fifties. . . . Saks Fifth Avenue honcho **Jaqui Lividini** attached at the hip to a waiter at a store press luncheon—a piece of her Bill Blass skirt got caught on his back-pocket button. Fortunately, Bill Blass design director **Herve Pierre** was there with his trusty pocket knife. Meanwhile, Anne Klein designer **Charles Nolan** told the folks at his table that he’s addicted to TiVo because he can watch *Trading Spaces* whenever he wants, especially when he has the urge to do some sketching in the middle of the night.

Oprah: No Stranger to Salma’s Charms

Salma Hayek was so happy that **Oprah Winfrey** displayed one of the paintings the actress had done for her starring role in *Frida* during an appearance on her show recently that she wanted to show her gratitude right away. She decided that the Kahlo-inspired sterling-silver bracelet she was wearing would be a perfect gift. Only one problem—the bracelet had been given to her by her boyfriend, **Edward Norton**. Before leaving Winfrey’s Chicago studio, Hayek called Norton and was happy to hear that he had no problem with her giving the bracelet to the talk-show queen.

SALMA HAYEK: A giving person

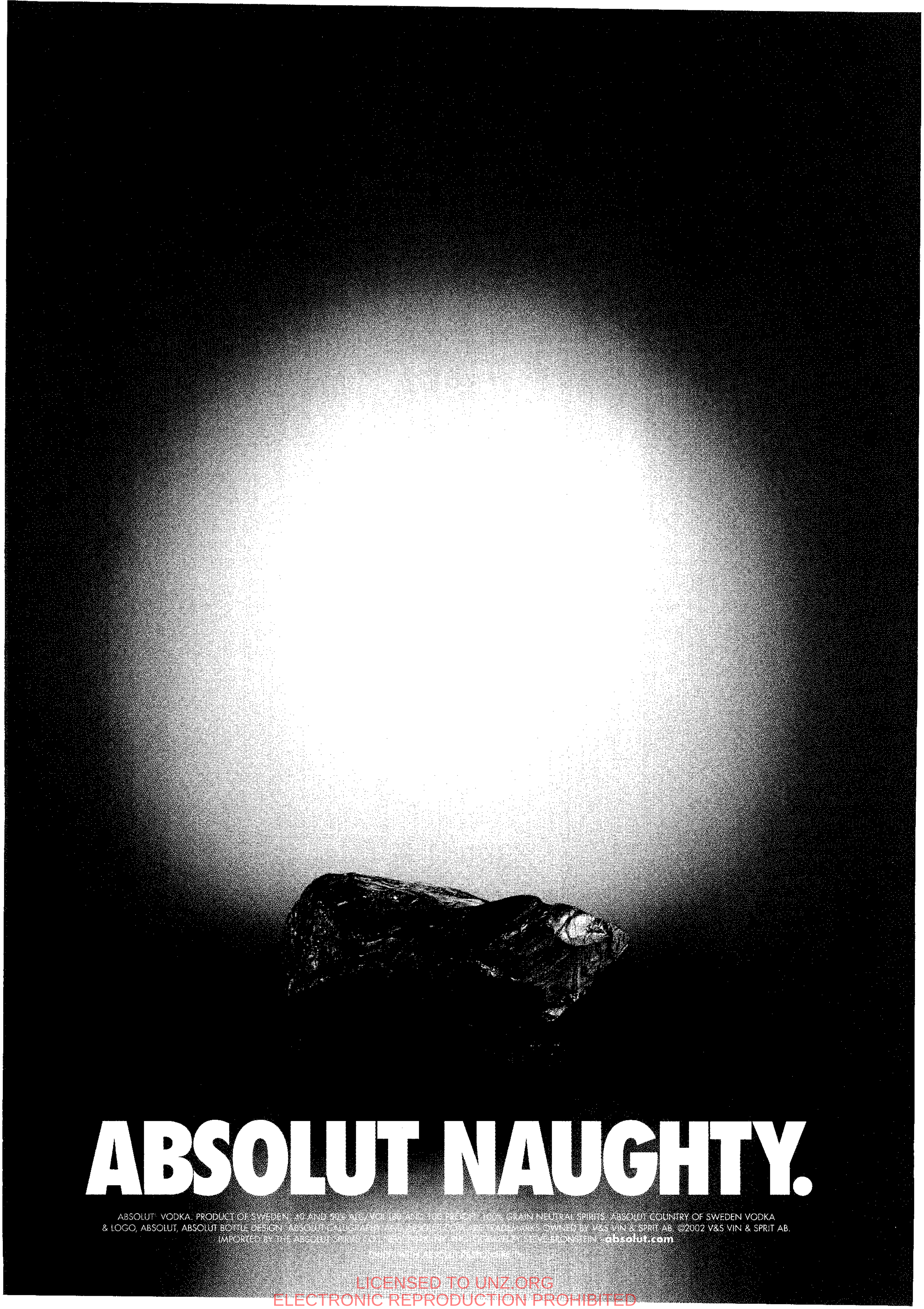
Hugh Knows How to Handle Harvey

Hugh Grant may not kiss **Harvey Weinstein**’s ass, but he sure likes grabbing it. During intermission at the opening night of *La Bohème*, one of our spies saw Grant goose the Miramax honcho. When Weinstein turned around, Grant replied, “Oh, you don’t like that?” Weinstein cracked, “I liked it better when you used to kiss me.” Grant asked if his quick feel at least gave Weinstein “a bit of a rise.”

With Aric Chen.

Heard any good gossip lately? E-mail us:
Intelligencer@NewYorkMag.com

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP, DJAMILLA ROSA COCHRAN/WIREIMAGE; BOTTOM, JEN LOWERY/LFI.



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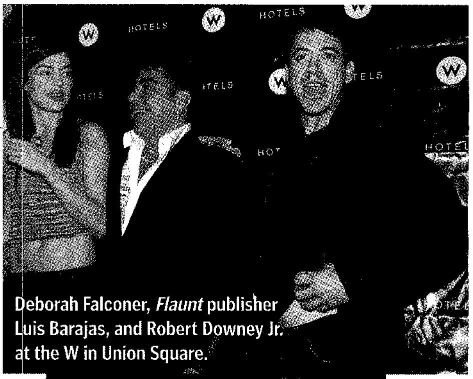
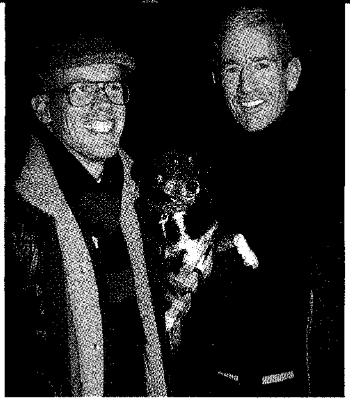
Scene

Maria Bartiromo and Serena Williams at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's opening-night gala at City Center.

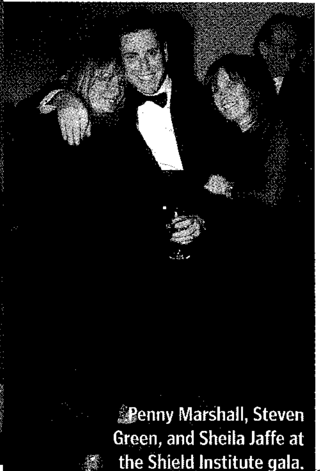

Deborah Falconer, *Flaunt* publisher Luis Barajas, and Robert Downey Jr. at the W in Union Square.

Diane Sawyer and Rosie O'Donnell at the Hetrick-Martin Institute's 2002 Emery Awards at the Estate nightclub.

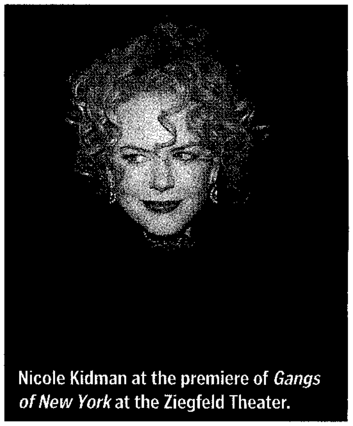
Leonardo DiCaprio, Tracey Pollan, and Michael J. Fox at the Metropolitan Pavilion for the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research benefit.


Steven Johanknecht, Sweetie, and Mark Welsh at Pucci for the Ruben and Isabel Toledo opening.

Eliza Bolen and Amanda Brooks at the Winter Gala at the Neue Galerie.


Penny Marshall, Steven Green, and Sheila Jaffe at the Shield Institute gala.

Catherine Martin, Baz Luhrmann, and Marcia Gay Harden at *La Bohème*'s bash at the Hudson Hotel.

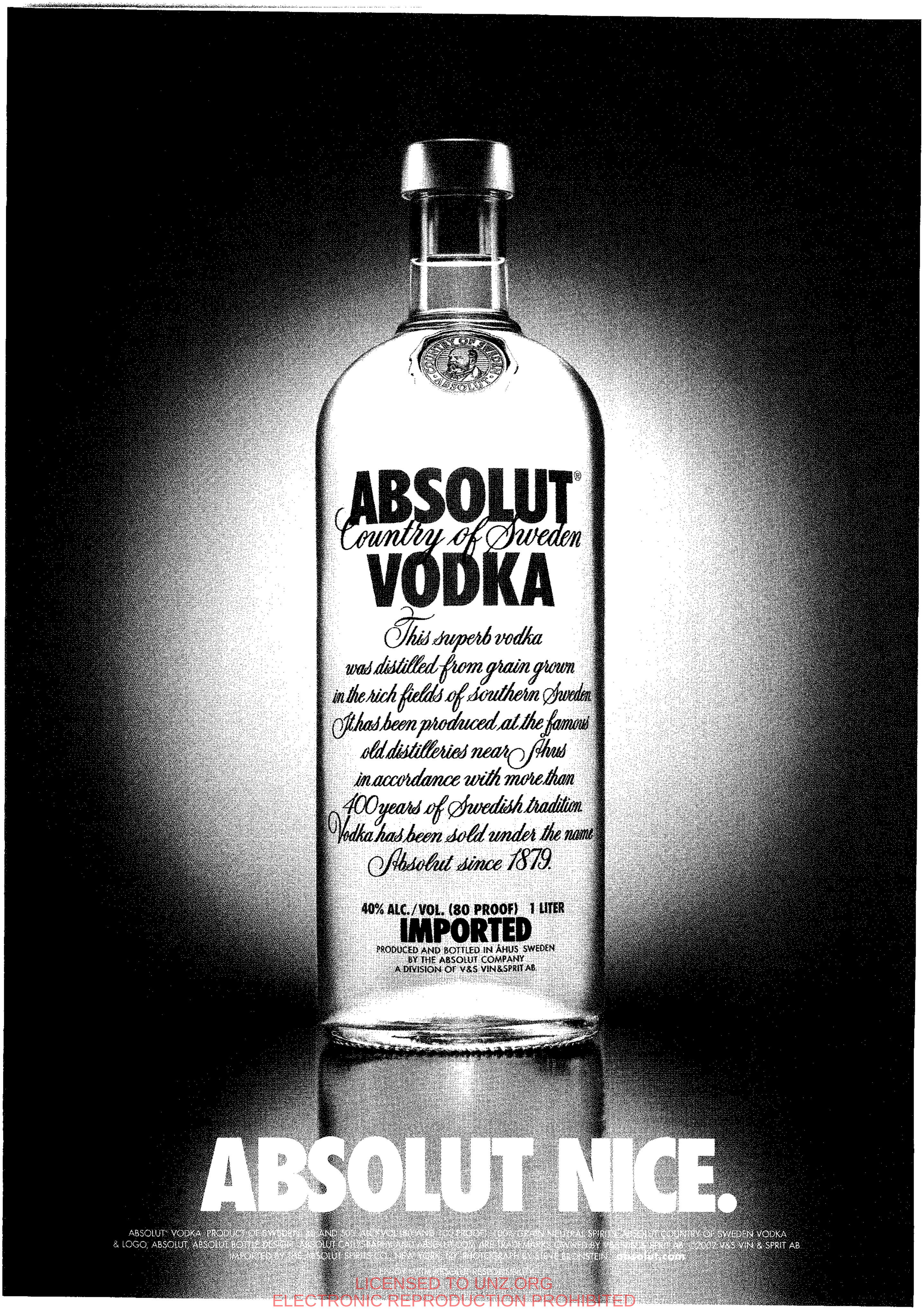

Nicole Kidman at the premiere of *Gangs of New York* at the Ziegfeld Theater.

Natasha Richardson and Liam Neeson at the *Maid in Manhattan* premiere.

Jill and Walter Fischer at the Winter Wonderland gala at the New York Botanical Gardens.

Cash Casia and Renata at Agent Provocateur's party at La Belle Époque.

Photographs by
Patrick McMullan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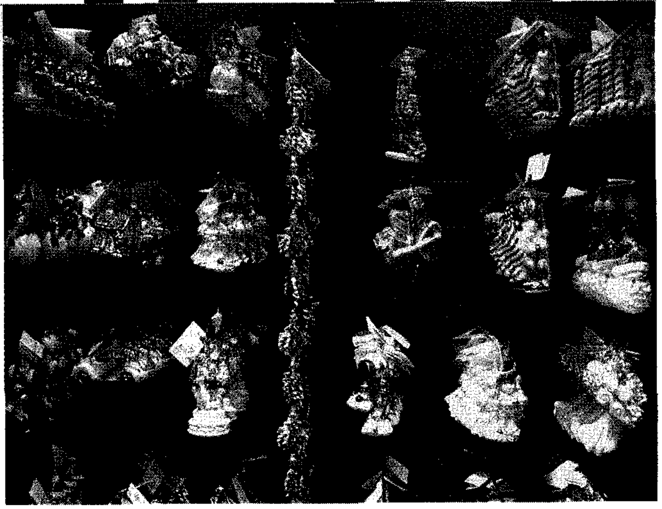
This orgy of violent lights—Albert Camus

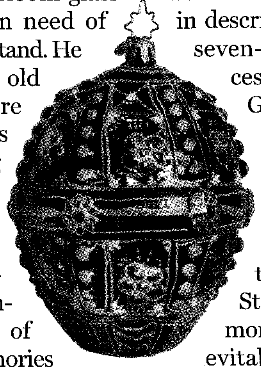
GOTHAM

All the Trimmings

O Christmas-tree ornament! You fill our memory vacuums so nicely. By Michael Tomasky



GILTY PLEASURES: Radko's ornaments at Saks Fifth Avenue, above; left, a $37 Fabergé-like egg.



From Christopher Radko's Website, we learn that when he was a young man, Radko was bullheaded enough, in that way that young men are, to suggest that the family Christmas tree, which carried some (are you ready?) 2,000 heirloom glass ornaments, was in need of a new and sturdier stand. He duly replaced the old model, and sure enough, seven days out from the big day, the fourteen-foot giant came crashing earthward, noisily bringing down with it generations' worth of Radko family memories and dreams.

It's not clear that Radko, who now designs Christmas-tree ornaments for a living, could run for president on the strength of this anecdote. As character-building, I've-been-to-the-bottom-and-found-my-redemption narratives go, it doesn't hold an Advent candle to Bill Clinton's pubescent confrontation with his alcoholic stepfather. But as any shrink or decent post-O'Neill playwright can attest, family guilt is a motivator like no other; and so Radko made it his mission to bring heirloom glass ornaments not only to his family but to the rest of us. Today, he bestrides the ornament world as a conqueror—its Erté, its Fabergé, or, if you insist on being catty about it, its Thomas Kinkade, marketing his hand-painted baubles (the Website, www.christopherradko.com, in describing each trinket's seven-day creation process, waxes positively Genesis-like) at $40 to $80 a pop.

Radko is doing for the Christmas ornament what Sub-Zero did for the refrigerator and Starbucks did for the morning cup of joe. Inevitably, the day will come when we will all be made to feel inadequate if our tree doesn't hold at least $1,500 worth of ornamentation. And yet he seems sincere about the whole thing. How can a person spend all year, every year thinking about Christmas and not be? No doubt he'd say he's just bringing beauty into the world.

But as Rilke wrote, more or less, where there is beauty there is also terror, and Christmas surely brings doses of both. The brief Christmas-morning scene in Todd Haynes's beautiful/terrifying *Far From Heaven* is silently harrowing, a reminder for any family of all those Christmases that somehow didn't go the way they do in the old movies. Those moments—Uncle Steve showing up drunk again—we suppress. Ornaments step in to fill this memory vacuum, which is why the personal symbols of the holiday—the old family crèche with Melchior missing his left hand, the felt-on-canvas Three Kings wall-hanging you did for Mrs. Bolyard's art class that Mom still dutifully hangs—end up being what many people cherish rather than the specific memories of events, which are much more a mixed bag. Time will prove, as Radkos spread out across the world, that he is soothing more consciences than his own.

CHARMED, I'M SURE

What: Charm bracelets by Jennifer George.

Where? Private parties only! Women show up clutching little baggies of solitary earrings and pukka shells. They give it all to George, a former fashion designer who wears maribou feathers in her hair. She combines it all with antiquey bits of her own to create the bracelets that, when the wrist moves, produce a satisfying clanking sound. "See what I've done with this client's twee cameo earrings?!" she says as they clatter between Bakelite fruits.

Who? Well-dressed, well-groomed moms with time to spare between drop-off and pickup.

What next? George hears a lot of stories in her work, and she's keeping track: She's had "two screenplays optioned." "Keep your receptors open," she says, winking. A customer holds up a tiny charm. "A trumpet!" says George. "How *interesting* . . ."

AMY LAROCCA

PRESTO CHANGE-O: A Jennifer George baubles-bangles-and-beads original.

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP, LUKE HOVERMAN (2); BOTTOM, MARY JACKSON.

Boy Vey

En garde, 'N Sync! From the Catskills to Far Rockaway, the Hamsa Boys are an Orthodox pop sensation. By Ariel Foxman

"I usually don't like Hebrew music, but the Hamsa Boys have got the moves," raves Galit Wernick, a 12-year-old Yeshiva student with flushed cheeks who'd come to see the group play an Upper East Side Orthodox synagogue. "And the blond guy is just so hot!"

The brainchild of Israeli producer Benji Rafaeli, the Hamsa Boys are, in essence, the Backstreet Boychiks, with cute-but-not-*too*-cute looks, *faux*-urban posturing, and matching costumes. At one point, a member even had *payis.*

"Non-Jewish kids have had something for a long time," says Rafaeli. "It was time for the Jewish kids to have a group with the same energy. Now everyone wants them. In Israel, in Russia . . . in Michigan!"

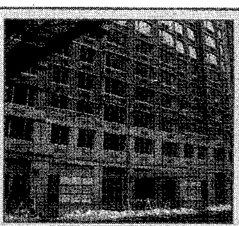
Since releasing their first CD, *Shema Yisroel* ("Hear, O Israel"), last April—the techno-pop collection of Hebrew prayers comes with the advisory "Please do not play this album on Shabbat"—the boys have hit the Catskills and electrified outer-borough shuls. And now in Manhattan, Hamsa was in the house (of worship) again. Well, most of Hamsa. Stealing a page from Destiny's Child, the band has already lost a member, Rocky. "Scheduling conflict," says 25-year-old David. "We're still good friends." (Rocky's replacement, Rafi, is the new designated "bad boy.")

After the emcee plugged coupons for local kosher restaurants, the Hamsa Boys launched into a 60-minute, two-encore, five-costume set culminating in a Michael Jackson–esque routine that had them stroking the brims of their black fedoras.

SUCH NICE BOYS! From left, Zvika, J.K., Kobi, David, and Rafi at a Manhattan synagogue.

Congregants were on their feet, but things didn't get as crazy as they have at other shows. "We played HAFTR"—the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway—"and the girls were hanging from the rafters," says David. "I was literally afraid for their life."

They've yet to be mobbed on the street, though. "We rehearse in Far Rockaway," adds David, "and when we go out for falafel, some girls recognize us. It's nice."



REAL ESTATE DEAL OF THE WEEK

MTV'S NEW CRIBS: The Marais, a new Chelsea co-op, is shaping up as the real *Real World:* Several MTV execs have bought places in the building, at 520 West 23rd Street. "I know that John Norris was interested in a two-bedroom," says MTV News director Mark Doctrow, who just purchased a 667-square-foot apartment for about $400,000. No word on whether he and his friends will be lolling around shirtless on Ikea couches and arguing over who ate everything in the fridge. JOY ARMSTRONG

AURAL PLEASURES

Move over, Ira Glass! Yes, every sensitive young woman and her gay brother has a crush on the host of "This American Life." ("You'll find yourself in a parking lot in the dark listening to Ira, and you feel like you're making out with him!" gushes Molly Hamill, 25.) But he's not the only NPR heartthrob in town. NINA WILLDORF

Terry Gross

Host of "Fresh Air"

Fan base: Tweedy types.
What they say: Larry, a fiftysomething professor: "I want to run away with her, at least for a long, cozy weekend of conversation!"
What she says: "There is something seductive about the interview process. People might be thinking how nice it would be to have someone who listened that *completely.*"

Silvia Poggioli

Senior European correspondent

Fan base: Foreign-policy wonks with wanderlust.
What they say: Jeff Ousborne, 31: "I always imagine her in some café discussing Ezra Pound, then dashing off to Sarajevo. The way she says her name is so worldly."
What she says: "Radio does foster an intimacy in which listeners develop their own special rapport with the reporter."

Soterios Johnson

Host of NPR's "Morning Edition" on WNYC

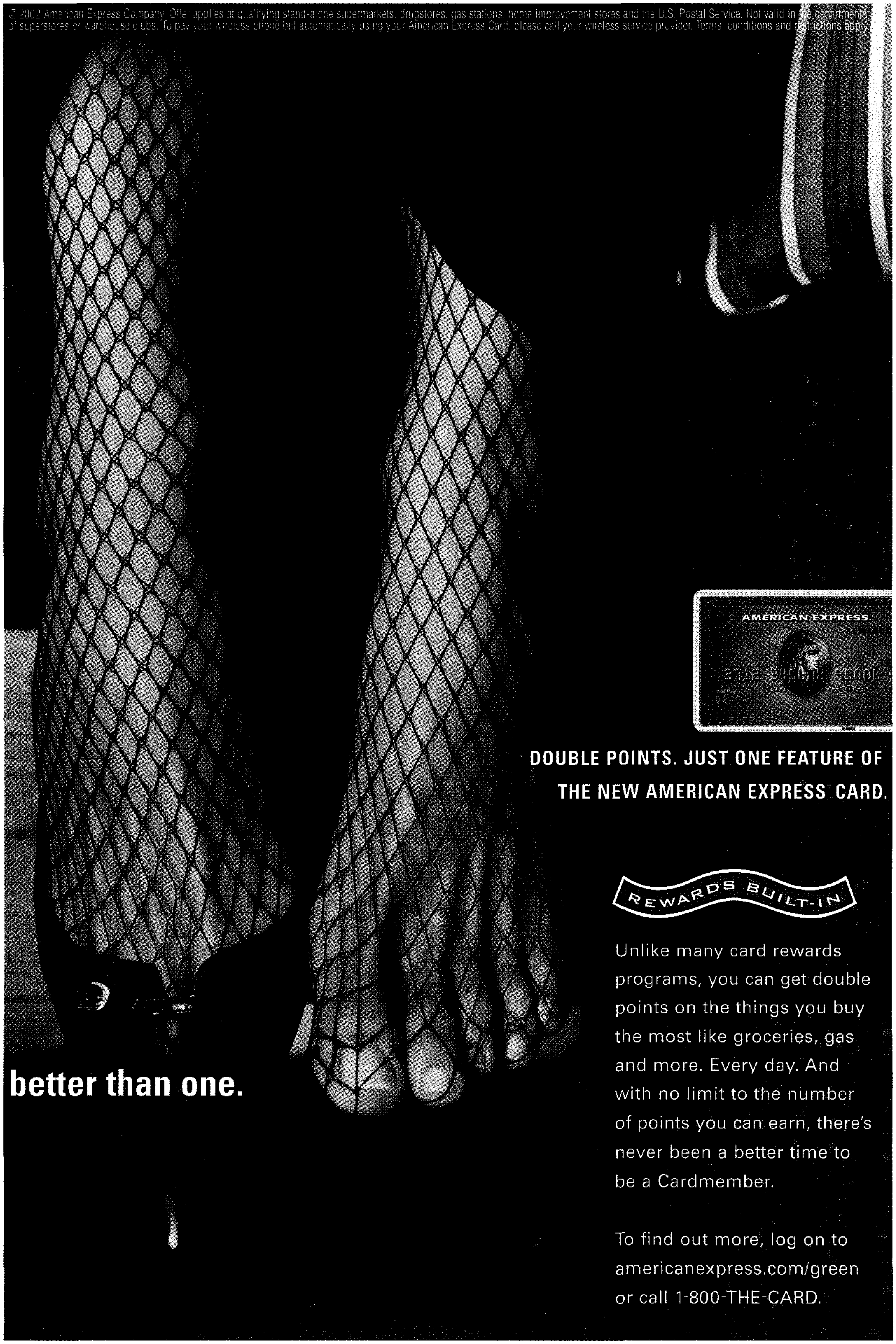
Fan base: The curious (what sort of name is Soterios anyway?).
What they say: Lauren Becker, 25: "He's on when you're half-awake, half-asleep. Sometimes I find myself dreaming about him."
What he says: "Wow. I'm flattered. My listeners are often in bed or in the shower. You can't get much more intimate than that." (P.S. He's Greek.)

Click and Clack

Tom and Ray Magliozzi, co-hosts of "Car Talk"

Fan base: White-collar folks with blue-collar fantasies.
What they say: Ellen, a nonprofit exec: "Terry Gross is terrific, but it's the 'Car Talk' guys that I'm *mad* for!"
What they say: Tom: "We're on radio. People can't see what we look like. If we were on TV, you wouldn't be doing this story."

PHOTOGRAPHS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, NOAH SHELDON; LUKE HOVERMAN; COURTESY OF NPR (4).



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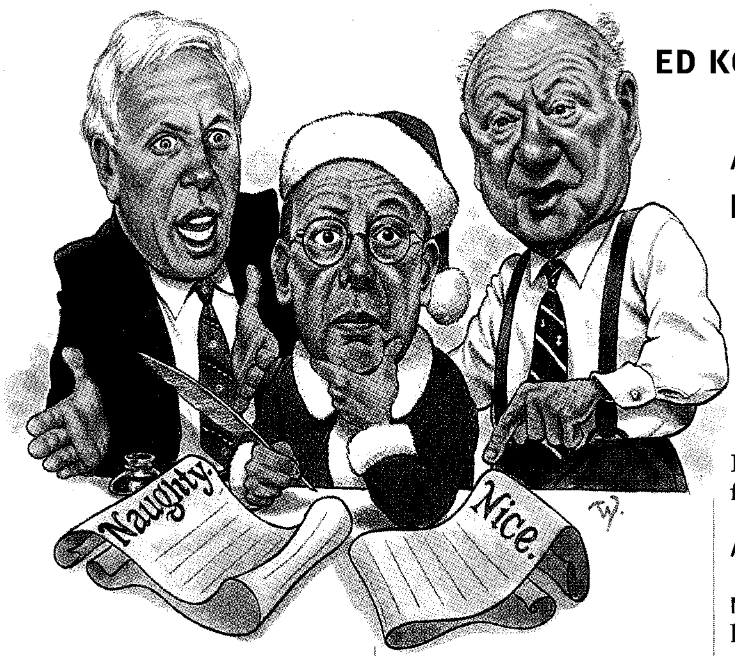

ED KOCH VS. AL D'AMATO VS. MARK GREEN

After Ed waxes nostalgic and Mark dissects Mayor Bloomberg, Al goes to bat for Trent Lott.

Jennifer Senior: Good afternoon, gentlemen. I don't know how you got here today, but there's a chance that by next week, the subway will no longer be an option. Mr. Mayor, maybe you'd like to tell us how you handled the transit strike in 1980.

Ed Koch: I was scared to death. I remember I was pacing the floors of One Police Plaza when I looked out the window and saw thousands of people streaming over the Brooklyn Bridge. And I thought, *This is going to save us.* From there, it was instinctive. I took the elevator downstairs, walked over to the bridge, and began to yell, "That's right! We're not going to let those bastards bring us to our knees!" And people applauded. So for eleven days, I went to every bridge in the city, encouraging people.

J.S.: Yes, but Bloomberg hardly has your brio or charisma. His popularity is tanking.

Ed: Well, his favorable rating is 31 percent. Anyone who raises taxes and reduces services and closes firehouses is going to make people angry.

Mark Green: But 31 percent is so low we have to figure out why. It's true that whoever became the 108th mayor would be suffering a decline right now. But Bloomberg hasn't developed a public personality that emotionally connects to voters, and he got elected without a normal political base that'd rescue him when things went south. Seventy-four million dollars is an asset but not a base.

Al D'Amato: [*Shrugging*] Bad times, bad news, bad polls. They all follow.

Mark: Al, you're so glib!

Al: Hey, I don't care if it was Ed Koch, Mark Green, even Alfonso the Great. Those numbers would still go down.

Ed: That's why it's so good that he's mayor at this time. He doesn't give a damn about polls. I don't even think he loves public service. I think he's doing it to establish he's capable of doing it.

Al: And he's not worried about re-election, which means he's able to make tough and unpopular decisions. Whereas someone like myself—ha! I might be saying, *Well, I'm worried about an election next year.*

Mark: Al, would you support Bill Gates over George Bush for president?

Al: No.

Mark: But your argument leads to that conclusion. I can't believe that either of you unwealthy men, who've dedicated your lives to public service, would argue that the best candidates are those so wealthy they don't have to be accountable to mere voters.

Ed: Just at this moment.

Mark: There's *always* a crisis, Ed. How many did you face in twelve years?

Ed: But thus far, the outcome has been spectacular—the Board of Education being the No. 1 example.

Al: Yep. Notwithstanding his lack of charisma—

Ed: Incredible. He could walk down the street and not be recognized. Except in the Bahamas.

Al: —he has won some very difficult battles.

Ed: Can I take us to another subject? Trent Lott. It was such an outrage. And it was even more outrageous that Bob Novak, on *Capital Gang*, defended him. Bob Novak and Pat Buchanan—they get away with murder, because the media don't hold colleagues to task. Both of them have made statements hostile to blacks and Jews, and yet they go blithely on. They should be excoriated.

J.S.: What about Trent Lott?

Ed: He should be removed.

Mark: Last week, Al talked eloquently on television about how minorities were moving into the Republican Party because his party does more for them. I will gladly stack up the Democratic Party led by Tom Daschle against the Republican Party led by Trent Lott, who in 2002 still lauds segregation.

Al: Look at the context. It was the celebration of Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday. I credit the remark to irrational exuberance. And that's all. He tried to be witty.

Mark: If a Democrat had made the equivalent statement, lauding the 1948 candidacy of Henry Wallace, Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity, who reach 25 million people on radio, would have acted as an accelerant. Fox would have led with it on their rotation. Democratic officials would have been forced to apologize.

J.S.: Still, this is just the sort of thing that Republicans are deft at exploiting: It's a hot-button issue, it's easily captured in a sound bite . . .

Mark: Well, Republicans are meaner.

Al: That doesn't even *deserve* a reply. ■

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Michael Wolff THIS MEDIA LIFE

You've Got Sex

Or rather, dear America Online, you *had* it. But as the suits at Time Warner prudishly looked away, you squandered your lead as the nation's leading purveyor of dirty chat.

THE THEATRICAL EFFORT TO REVIVE AMERICA Online is not just a business soap opera but one of those great, almost poignant instances of the culture going one way and a heroic, albeit oddly out-of-it, ragtag group thinking it can hold fast against the tide.

Here's the real rub: AOL's fundamental business—which has always been a level or two down from the family-oriented opening screen—is dirty talk. But now there are better places to talk dirty.

The big attraction of AOL through all of its growth years has been not just ease but easy prurience. Its real selling point was that you could buy something perfectly respectable and get something very dirty—it was the ultimate brown paper bag. In fact, the more respectable it got—building up a critical mass of American families (women too!)—the dirtier, and more compelling, it became.

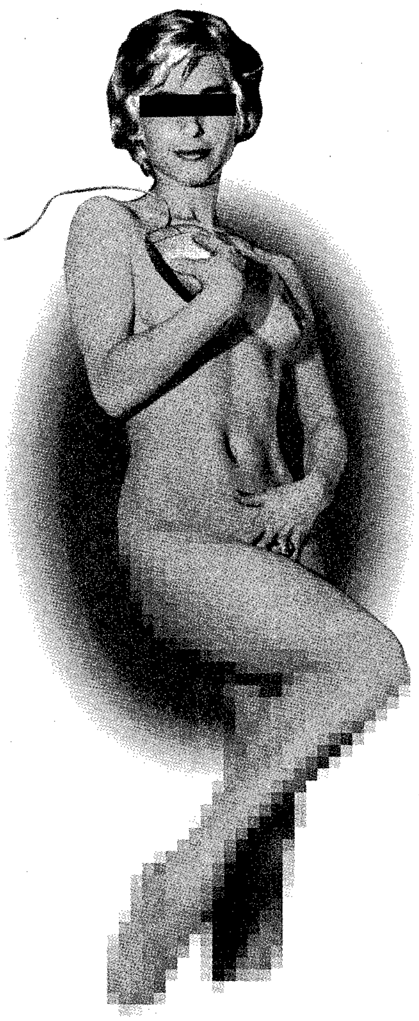
But in a turn of vast social consequence, seeking sex on the Internet has become no longer weird or shameful behavior. Across the Internet, dirty talk has become a progressively more developed social form—even a social norm. In fact, it is quite possible that *everybody* of a certain demographic profile who is dissatisfied with his or her current romantic prospects is experimenting with meeting someone online.

Here's my evidence:

John Podhoretz, the very conservative and highly un-with-it columnist and former editorial-page editor at the New York *Post*, much interested in family values and opposed to anything that suggests moral relativity, met a woman on matchmaker.com and married her. (The site where a couple meets is becoming an element of respectable wedding and engagement announcements.)

What's more, the matchmaking business is growing in a way, and producing profits of a sort, not seen since the advent of eBay (among the largest dating businesses is Barry Diller's match.com).

Then, too, in my personal focus group of thirtysomething single people, everybody is talking about meeting someone online (nerve.com for arty people; Jdate.com for Jews; match.com for Wall Street back-office types) and having more sex than ever before (when you visit another city, you set up some dates before you arrive—like booking a hotel).



And logically, why wouldn't every lonely heart try a dating site?

Given the reach and the efficiency of Web dating, there would be only two things reasonably holding you back here: embarrassment and technical difficulties. But if John Podhoretz is doing it, the embarrassment factor is obviously dwindling—it's a perfectly decent, unremarkable, squaresville thing to do. And with dating sites throwing off lots of cash (the more you want to know about a possible date, the more you pay, seems to be the basic model), the technology for online courtship rituals—searching, profiling, chatting, photo uploading—has become really nifty.

There's the safety factor, too—which is a numbers game. The more normal people who are doing this means the lower your chances of meeting a monster at the Bennigan's in your neighborhood.

IN CONTRAST TO THE NEW, SLICK, AND EASY-to-use hookup sites, AOL has started to look like a bus station.

AOL succeeded in creating a simple, orderly, largely text-based chat client—the first to work effortlessly. Next, AOL developed the Instant Message (IM), through which you could talk directly to anyone else online; then it offered a searchable database of fellow chatters that grew to vast proportions (any interest or kink was immediately searchable); and in 1996, it introduced the Buddy List, through which you could monitor the comings and goings of anyone who interested you (or whose kink interested you). This simple technology—nontechnical people really couldn't chat anywhere else online—was the engine of AOL's wild growth. And finally, AOL extended its chat range with the AIM applet, which could be used from outside the walls of AOL to chat with other AOLers (and other AIMsters).

Then AOL rested.

ILLUSTRATION BY LOU BEACH.

Certainly, it could afford to. Not only did AOL have better technology, it had what nobody could reproduce without great luck and limitless money, which was a critical-mass audience—chat doesn't work unless, at every moment of the day, you have loads of chatters. Across the Internet, there were lonely chat rooms (where the chat function didn't really work, anyway) and, at AOL, rowdy and randy crowds ("Are you hot?" "Yeah! What are you wearing?").

Meanwhile, the AOL guys were refining their story. A great American brand could not appear to be in the sex business. So what AOL focused on was getting the dirty-talk audience to buy things. From sex to commerce was the conversion it was attempting (this is the conversion that cable television managed with infomercials in the mid-eighties). Certainly, Time Warner believed in conversion (the people at AOL used the word *community* as a euphemism, but the people at Time Warner used the word for *real*—as though imagining little shops and churches and schools).

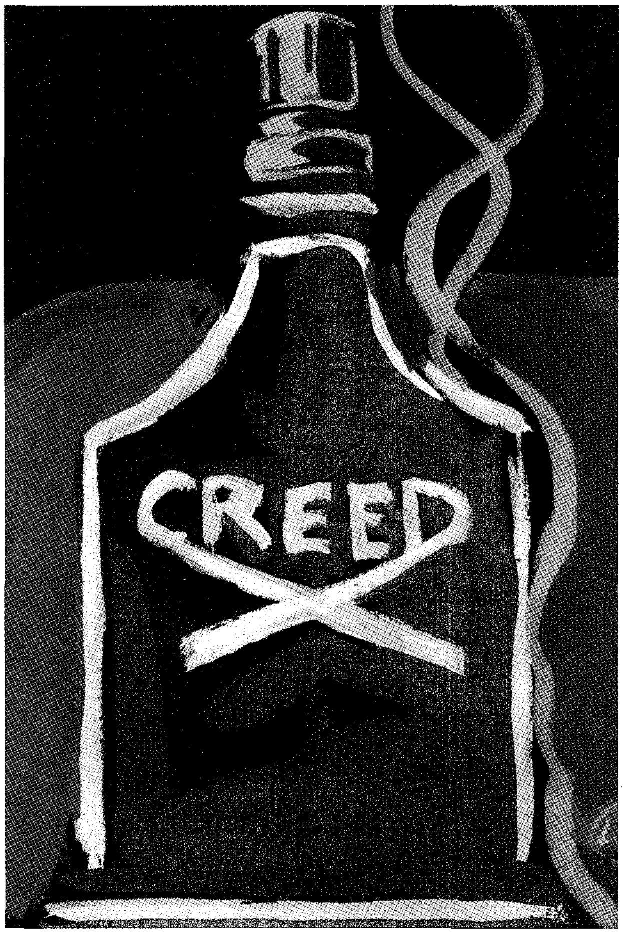
The result of this confusion or obfuscation about what AOL really does, as well as the ensuing cutbacks, recriminations, and dismissals that came with the AOL TW merger, meant that development in most areas at AOL stopped—for two years, virtually nothing!—just at the time when easy-to-use chat was breaking out all over the Web.

Everybody with any speed is locating and targeting and qualifying possible mates with great ease in well-designed, mall-like settings, while back at AOL, it's still a creepy, anonymous, low-class world (AOL's weird censorship policies, in an increasingly tolerant world, somehow seem to add an extra measure of tawdriness). Or, in a high-speed world, you and your friends are merely using the AIM applet, effectively cutting AOL out of the transaction.

It's a demographic nightmare: If you are still signing on to AOL to chat, there is, ipso facto, something wrong with you.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE MERGER, I thought this was going to be an interesting cultural problem. The AOL guys had always managed to keep the dialectic finely in play—encouraging dirty chat by encouraging family values. Profiles to foster "community" and multiple screen names for family use and parental controls to create clearly marked areas of menace (otherwise, it was hard to find this stuff) served its porn business as well as its family image.

But this is not something you would have explained to the Time Warner guys.



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In contrast to **the new, slick, and easy-to-use hookup Websites,** America Online looks more and more like a bus station. And its weird censorship policies add an **extra measure of tawdriness.**

I'm pretty sure nobody from AOL ever sat down at a Time Warner boardroom table and spelled out the workings of the autoeroticism business.

And count on it, the Time Warner people, those uptight guys, didn't ask.

What's more, I think the higher-up AOLers suddenly, given the opportunity, didn't want to be in the sex business anymore either. They'd all made hundreds of millions—now they wanted to be respectable.

Classically, nobody was minding the store.

Now, AOL's problems are always blamed on the AOL people—they were the flimflammers who got everybody into trouble. And they certainly *were* the flimflammers—always playing a bit of bait and switch, always cooking the books a bit.

But the Time Warner guys were not only the guys who got duped but the guys who couldn't even see the real value of what they had: a monopoly on dirty chat. Possibly the greatest growth industry of the age.

The AOL problem is in some ways similar to the CNN problem.

The CNN reason for being became less and less clear after it was taken over by Time Warner. The outsider identity got confused. The scrappy thing suddenly seemed ridiculous. The tone went off.

Likewise AOL, which had this canny sense of what Americans wanted to do in the privacy of their own computers, stopped having it.

STEPPING INTO THE TIME MACHINE: In 1994, I was a consulting member of a four-man committee at Time Warner that made two decisions.

The first decision was not to buy AOL. Among the considerations was that AOL was so unique, and its route to success so eccentric, and its understanding of the relationship of technology to culture so quirky, that Time Warner, with its heavy-handed, unquirky literalness, could be counted on, in the estimation of Walter Isaacson, one of the committee members and now the chairman of CNN, "to screw it up."

The second decision was that Time Warner would start a Website of its own which would be built around what everyone considered to be the Time Warner mother lode of irresistible content—it had *People* magazine! With some prescience, the Time Warner people, who know a thing or two about advertising, correctly surmised that advertising was not going to support the Internet. And so the plan was to *sell* users Time Warner content. (In my personal defense, I kept talking about what a dirty place AOL was—that the Internet was the porn business. But the feeling seemed to be that, first, I was joking and, second, while new entertainment technologies often started dirty, they soon became much more sanitized and mass-market.) This service, which started in the autumn of 1994 and closed in the spring of 1999, was called Pathfinder and proved two things: Selling Time Warner content on the Internet was pretty much a nonstarter, and the people at Time Warner lacked a certain flair for the Internet. *We just don't get it,* they said. Which was the essential reason for merging with AOL.

Now, in a fascinating and comic turn of events, AOL has come full circle to an idea that eerily resembles Pathfinder.

Most of the core AOL executives have departed (although Steve Case's picture has recently returned to the opening screen, exhorting the faithful), leaving the Time Warner people, with all their inhibitions, in charge.

It is unlikely that they have spent much time in the Long Island Swingers chat room in the Special Interests chat area, or given much thought to building a business to cater to those special interests—that is, pursuing the business that AOL created and until recently dominated.

Instead, the Time Warner guys, in some remarkable demonstration of human and corporate steadfastness, have announced that they are going to save AOL by transforming it into a business that sells Time Warner content. For a premium, you'll be able to read *People* online!

Forgive me . . . ROTFL. ■

E-mail: michael@burnrate.com. Michael Wolff's "This Media Life" archive can be found online at www.newyorkmetro.com/archive/wolff.

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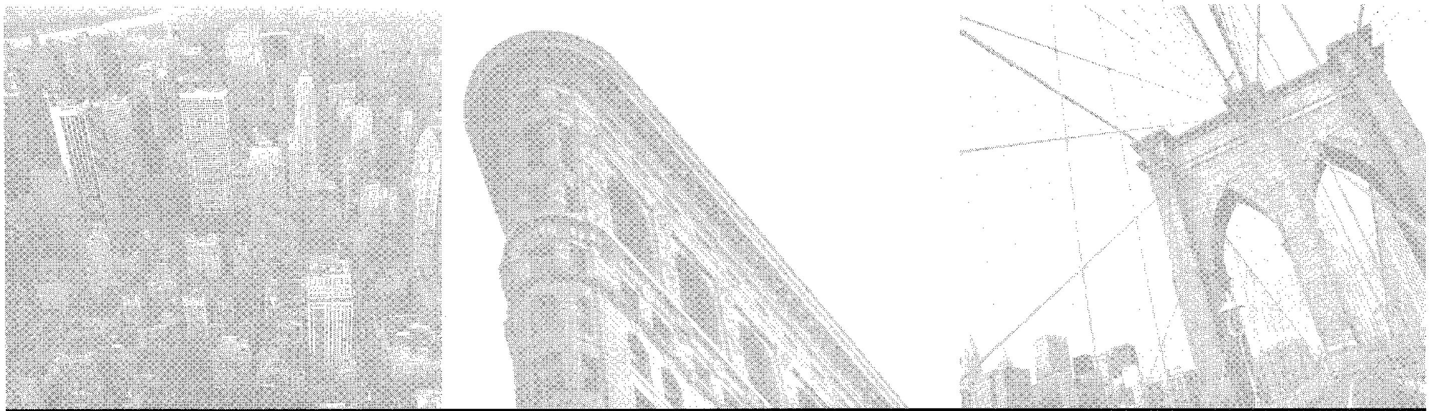

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Money for Nothing

Bush's big idea for rescuing the economy is to make the rich richer. But guess what: Our financial malaise has nothing to do with inadequate spending by the wealthy.

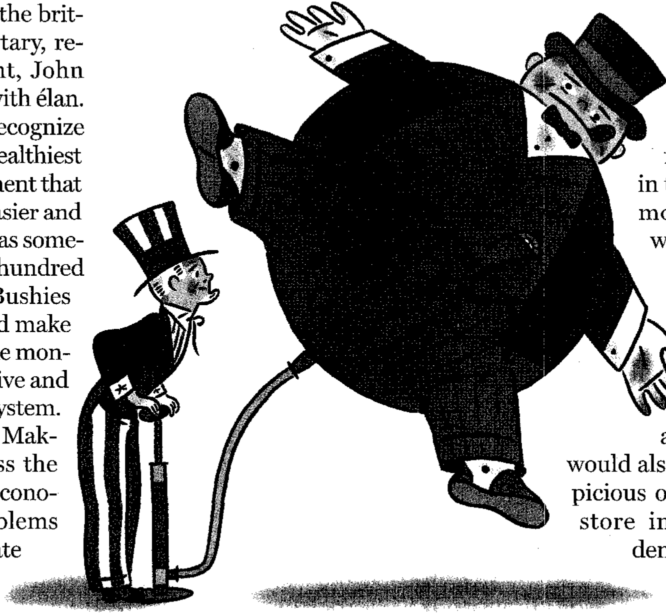
NOW THAT HE'S AXED THE HEADS OF THE SEC, the economic council, and Treasury, President Bush has a rare opportunity to redefine economic policy—and not a moment too soon. Just as his international team developed the preemption doctrine in stark contrast to containment and deterrence, Bush's new domestic team can break with the past and get the U.S. economy growing again in a way that will allow all Americans to benefit.

But first, the administration has to admit that there are problems in the economy, something that Paul O'Neill, the brittle but sunshiney Treasury secretary, refused to do but his replacement, John Snow, a more suave exec, can do with élan. And the administration has to recognize that simply cutting taxes for the wealthiest isn't a policy at all. It's just a statement that says the rich should have it even easier and cushier than we do now. I say that as someone who stands to make a couple hundred thousand dollars pronto if the Bushies accelerate the current tax cuts and make them permanent. As much as I like money, there are a lot of more productive and fairer ways to tinker with the tax system.

More important, it won't work. Making the rich richer won't address the fundamental weaknesses of the economy, because the economy's problems have nothing to do with inadequate consumption by the wealthy. They have to do with too much capacity and not enough demand on the corporate side. Or to put it in the language of the stock market, the housing, auto, and retail-sales markets—all of which would be goosed by cutting the taxes of the wealthy—are already operating at full tilt. If you look at home prices, for instance, you could argue that they are operating in overdrive. Simply making the rich richer would amount to turning the oven from 500 degrees to 600 degrees, effectively burning what's broiling already.

I don't know if the tax cutters truly don't understand that they are simply overstimulating the hottest part of the economy or if they're just out to starve the government—make it smaller and less effective—because they fundamentally distrust government.

Regardless, it's just plain stupid to focus on the take-home pay of those who make $300,000 or more when we are trying to get *companies* to build and reinvest, not individuals. For that, we have to ask, *How did we get to the point where corporations are so strapped, anyway?* The simple answer is debt: Companies took on too much debt and built too much capacity without having the ability to pay for it.



To get back on track, any new economic team has to break with tradition and recognize that we need intervention, positive intervention, from the government, because the weak portion of the corporate side right now is incapable of stimulating itself.

First, the team has to radically change the tax code so it favors equity over debt. Right now, companies can deduct interest from earnings, but they can't deduct dividends. So what companies do is borrow money like mad and buy back stock to prop up their stocks so the executives can exercise and sell the options they've been given. You couldn't come up with a stupider way to reward dumb behavior and accentuate the difference between the executives and the rank and file if you tried.

What should happen? We should eliminate the deduction for interest for corporations and let them deduct the dividends they pay out. Then they would create long-term income streams that would make the stock market a simple, more rational place for investors. We would all be in the hunt for stocks that pay the most dividends, and we would want to become long-term shareholders of those enterprises. If we went a step further and eliminated the tax on dividends at the individual level, buying stock would become the best tax-advantaged way to get rich. We would also be, by nature, much less suspicious of equities—a quick way to restore investor trust—because dividends don't lie. If companies don't make any money, they can't pay dividends. If they stumble, they can cut the dividend. Right now, if they stumble, they have to file for bankruptcy because they can't cut out interest payments without surrendering to the lenders.

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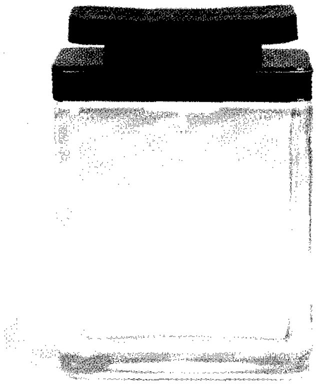

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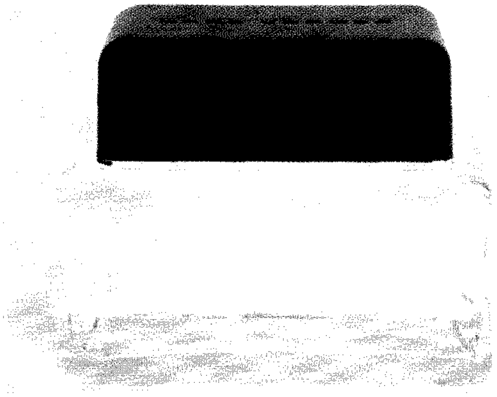

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Second, we have to have an economic team that's less willing to leave things to fate. For example, why does United Airlines not get a loan even though we have set up an entity to bail out airlines, but WorldCom gets tons of government business even though it committed the worst financial fraud in U.S. history? Why do we allow WorldCom to be fast-tracked out of bankruptcy with no debt even as we close Arthur Andersen because its Houston office shredded documents? Why do we allow a new WorldCom to be able to compete debt-free against honest players like Verizon, or SBC or AT&T, when we doom UAL to liquidation?

Believe it or not, these are Treasury Department decisions. There is a reason why people respected Bob Rubin, and it isn't just because Wall Street "understood" him. Rubin and his team, including his successor, Larry Summers, actually thought about and debated these kinds of issues because they knew that "the marketplace" often reaches illogical if not downright unfair conclusions.

Third, we need to recognize that we have to allow our battered tech and telco sectors, with their massive unused capacity, to help out with homeland security. We have tons of companies and people that don't have enough business but could develop a national law-enforcement data link, and protect us from terrorists that are now surely slipping through the cracks, but they aren't being engaged because the federal government doesn't understand how to harness these troubled industries. Again, that's a Treasury issue.

Understand, it is not as simple as finding someone who speaks genuine Wall Street gibberish, something that Snow badly needs to take a crash course in. Nor is it as easy as getting some graybeard who can negotiate with the investment banks as the presidential economic adviser.

What we need is a vision, an acceptance that things aren't working as they should be working, and a recognition that it is the corporate balance sheet, not the individual's balance sheet, that needs help. Only then will the economy return to the 5 to 6 percent growth that we know is possible without igniting inflation.

Don't just cut taxes and hope for growth; fix the corporate balance sheets and watch the economy grow on its own! ■

James J. Cramer is co-founder of TheStreet.com. At the time of publication, he owned stock in Verizon. He often buys and sells securities that are the subject of his columns and articles, both before and after they are published, and the positions that he takes may change at any time. *e-mail: jjcletters@thestreet.com*

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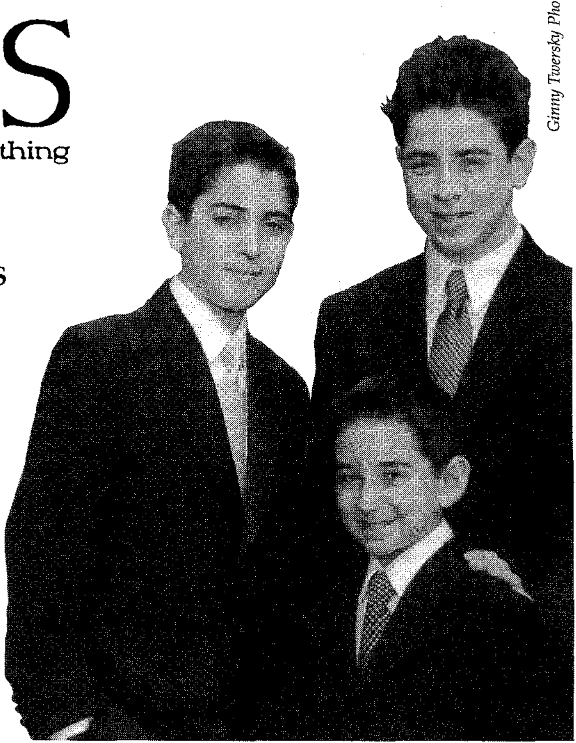

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Anne Thompson HOLLYWOOD

Spike Lee's Game

It's been a long time since *She's Gotta Have It* put him on the map, and his latest, *25th Hour*, may be his most mainstream movie yet. But if you think Lee's gone Hollywood, think again.

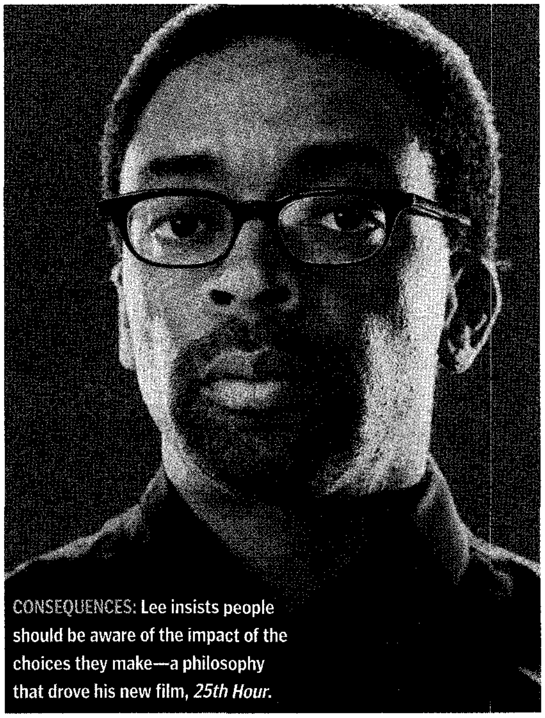
THERE ARE TWO MOVIES THAT SPIKE Lee wants to make, ambitious period bio-epics of larger-than-life sports heroes Jackie Robinson and Joe Louis, movies that have a lot to say about who we are as a society.

When he talks about Budd Schulberg's Joe Louis screenplay, the director's eyes light up. "It has Hitler in it, Goebbels, FDR, Mussolini—*everybody's* in this film!" Lee reports, between bites of a burger, poolside at the Mondrian hotel on Sunset. "It's not just about boxing. It's fascism versus democracy."

Yet Lee says he can't raise the money for these big movies. Movies about African-Americans, including famous ones—even revered ones—don't play overseas. *Malcolm X*, at $48 million his highest-grossing studio film, didn't establish him as either a blockbuster cookie-cutter or a big-name auteur with a global following. Still, after seventeen years and sixteen movies, Lee has the reputation, chops, and magnetism to make whatever film he wants—if he wants it enough to play the studio game a little. It's a choice he almost always declines to make. His most recent feature, the daring digital-video blackface satire *Bamboozled*, belly-flopped at $2.2 million. He needs a hit.

Plenty of independent directors—Paul Thomas Anderson, Alexander Payne, Wes Anderson, Steven Soderbergh, and even Lee's fellow New York outsiders the Coen brothers—seem to navigate Hollywood with more finesse. "Considering how few of Lee's films have had commercial success," says a producer he's worked with, "it's remarkable how he has retained his position."

When he's making TV spots for Madison Avenue—he's one of the most sought-after and highly compensated directors in the industry—Lee's all business. But when it comes to features, what he cares about is art; fellow New Yorkers Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen are his role models. "Because he earns his big-time money in commercials," says *Variety* editor-in-chief Peter Bart, "he doesn't feel he has to work on pictures that get him a mass audience."


CONSEQUENCES: Lee insists people should be aware of the impact of the choices they make—a philosophy that drove his new film, *25th Hour.*

Producer Tom Pollock, who made six films with Lee when he was chairman of Universal, agrees. "The limitations for Spike are not about race, they're about art," he insists. "The Hollywood studio business has never been more divided about art and commerce." Hollywood, to take one sensational example, looked at Steven Soderbergh a lot differently after he made *Erin Brockovich.*

Lately, however, at 45, Lee seems willing to meet Hollywood, if not halfway, at least somewhere in the neighborhood. Widely considered his best film in years, *25th Hour* has an Oscar-worthy screenplay and features not only a star (Edward Norton) but a lot of Spike's edgy humor. "*25th Hour* fell out of the sky," Lee says. The story recounts the last day in the life of New York drug dealer Monty Brogan (Norton) before he goes to prison. "I liked it right away, the guy about to do a seven-year bid, his last 24 hours of freedom."

Julia Chasman and her producing partner, Nick Wechsler, had developed David Benioff's adaptation of his 2001 debut novel with Tobey Maguire, who left the project to film *Spider-Man.* Lee worked closely with Benioff on updating *25th Hour* to a post-9/11 New York City. "My fear was that someone who didn't know New York would direct it, so I was thrilled," says Benioff, adding that Lee assuaged his fear that key moments in the novel would fail to make the transition to screen: "When we met, he had the script and the book all underlined—and he wanted to put the 'fuck you' rant back in the movie." The scene is a diatribe in which Monty vents his rage at virtually every human element of the city he loves, invoking familiar stereotypes in a raw, emotional outpouring that's at least as much self-hate as hate itself. Benioff himself hadn't figured out how to make the monologue work on film, but Lee had Brogan shouting at himself in a men's-room mirror while the camera cuts to images of the offending New Yorkers.

THE MOVIE OPENS WITH A SOARING MONTAGE of New York images that will remind many of the beginning of Woody Allen's black-and-white valentine, *Manhattan.* After 9/11, the Brooklyn-bred Lee was offended by the rash of movies like *Spider-Man* that had erased all traces of the Twin Towers. "I could not live with myself, being a New Yorker," Lee says, "if I shot this film after 9/11 and went about my business like nothing ever happened."

Indeed, Lee filmed one highly charged scene in an apartment overlooking ground

PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSE FROHMAN/CORBIS OUTLINE.

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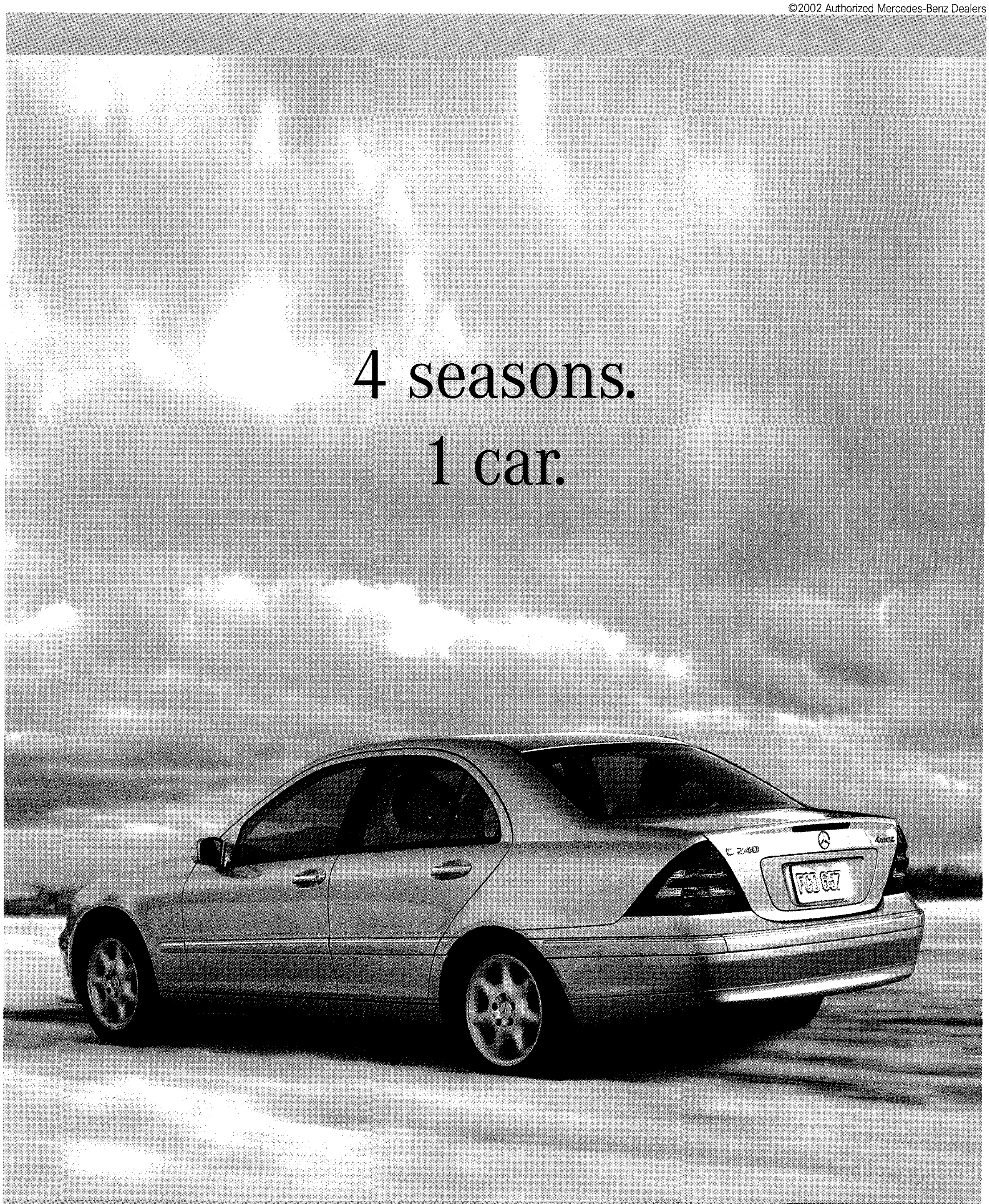

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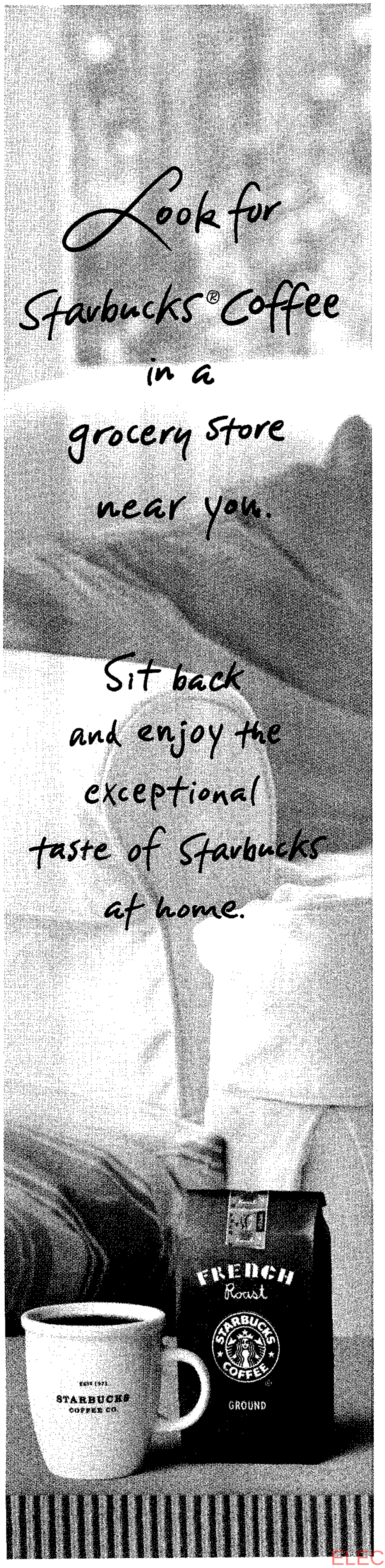

FINAL *HOUR*: Edward Norton, left, a longtime fan of Lee's films, instantly signed on to make *25th Hour*, which also stars Philip Seymour Hoffman, center.

zero. As Monty's pals, played by Barry Pepper and Philip Seymour Hoffman, walk to the window and look down at the site below, Pepper declares, "Bin Laden could drop another one right next door, I ain't movin'." Says Lee, "To me, that's New Yorkers talking. I know the location enhanced the actors' performances."

Norton says he'd wanted to work with Lee ever since he saw *He Got Game*, and signed on as soon as he read the script. "I am always amazed at the degree that he is taken for granted by the rest of the filmmaking community," the actor says. "There are not that many people committed to making tough and complicated social-issue films that examine the dynamics of the world we live in. At the same time, he's an incredible stylist."

Not surprisingly, Disney—which had backed *Summer of Sam* and *He Got Game*, and snapped up the package of Lee directing a cut-rate Norton on a bargain-basement budget of $14 million—was, well, uneasy with the rant. Monty's list of everything he's about to leave behind almost got cut, because among the targets of his fuck-yous are George Bush and Jesus Christ. Disney executives were "leery of offending every group in America," says Benioff, who along with Lee argued heatedly to keep the set piece.

"They thought the scene was too harsh, that it might make the audience not like Monty Brogan," Lee says. "But he's a drug dealer. I did not want to glamorize him. He was dealing serious weight. Why shouldn't he go to jail? The movie is about moral choices and the consequences of choices."

"It's rare to encounter people who are **unaffected by the fears or expectations** of others," actor Edward Norton says of Lee.

When Disney previewed the movie, there was debate about how to modulate the 9/11 references. But the fuck-you rant inspired early audiences to cheer. Lee and Disney production chief Nina Jacobson also went toe-to-toe on the film's length and stopped speaking for days. Ultimately, Lee trimmed five minutes, but he refused to change the movie's literary, fork-in-the-road ending.

"Some stuff you have to go to the mat on," he says. "I say to studio executives, 'Show me the book where Hitchcock, Kurosawa, and Welles say, *You can't do this.*' Where are these maxims? Who wrote these golden constructs of things you can't do in a movie? There really are no rules."

In the end, Jacobson says, "Spike is a strong advocate for his material and a worthy adversary in disagreement. I'm proud of myself for listening to him. All the arguments I lost, I'm glad that I lost."

MICHAEL MOORE'S *BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE* is Spike's favorite film of the year. Like Moore, and like Oliver Stone, Lee has strong leftist leanings, authority issues, and a big mouth. Stone may be one of the best-known directors in America, but he's famous for being a paranoid conspiracy theorist. Spike Lee may be one of Hollywood's most visible brand names, but he's also perceived by many as an angry black filmmaker; projects like *Get On the Bus* and *Bamboozled* feed this perception.

"He gets labeled as a demagogue, strident, controversial, provocative," says Norton. "If he's anything, he's consistently humanistic. In *25th Hour*, he elicits sympathy and compassion for the complex humanity of these people."

Norton, known for being extremely hands-on with his directors, found himself unexpectedly relaxed with Lee. "He doesn't sit back, he gets it and moves on," the actor says of Lee's working style. "He's very demanding; you come in prepared. It's rare to encounter people who are unaffected by the fears or expectations of other people."

Not everyone believes Lee's iconoclasm has been the thing to hurt him; some blame his sensibility. "I don't think the trait of being an agitator impedes one's progress

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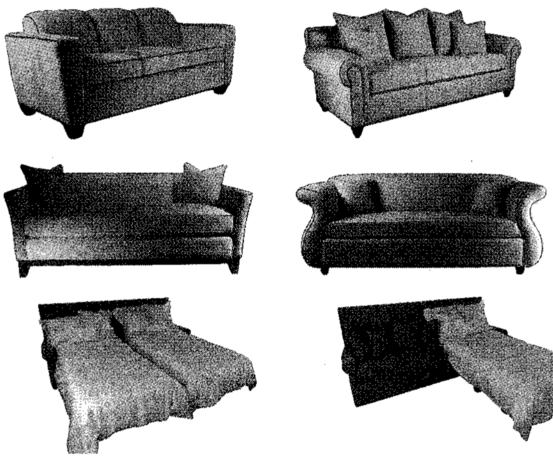

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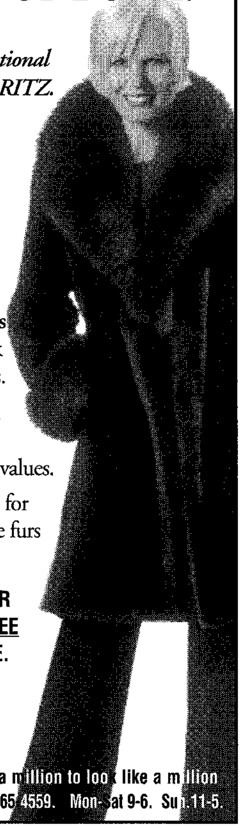

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in Hollywood," notes *Variety*'s Bart, "as long as one delivers the hits. Spike's not motivated to do that."

When Lee took over the *Malcolm X* directing reins from Norman Jewison, he declared that it was only appropriate for an African-American to direct this project. And while he feuded openly with Warner Bros., he angrily allowed the movie to go overbudget. Though the rap has dogged him ever since, getting *Malcolm* made by any means necessary turned out to be the exception that proves the rule. "The part about Spike nobody appreciates," says Jacobson, "is that he is the most financially responsible filmmaker around. It's amazing that he and Jon Kilik"—the line producer—"shot *25th Hour* entirely in New York City for $14 million."

Lee's profile as an African-American filmmaker has been deeply affected by his role as a spokesperson for the black community. He's always willing to use his soapbox to advocate change. "The studio system is rigged against people of color," he says, "even after whatever progress last year's Oscar wins may represent. Change is going to be made in this industry when people of color get into positions of power as the gatekeepers. You still have to get somebody to give the green light; those are the people who have the power, who say, 'Yes, this film is getting made.'

"The African-American experience is relegated to three ghettos," he continues. "Low-brow comedy like *Juwanna Mann* and *Barbershop;* romantic comedy like *Brown Sugar* and *The Best Man;* and hip-hop-gangsta shoot-'em-ups. That's it. If you have an African-American film outside those ghettos, it's really hard to get a film made."

Lee greatly admires Soderbergh, whose *sex, lies, and videotape* beat *Do the Right Thing* for the 1989 Palme d'Or at Cannes. But Lee points out that the filmmaker runs Section 8, a production company, with movie star George Clooney, who lends his clout to the enterprise and stars in some of Soderbergh's films. Lee wouldn't mind if *25th Hour* scored him some time in that bigger playpen. But he won't compromise his hard-earned freedom—or his hard-won final cut. Lee gets how the game is played—and the fact that he must deal with the consequences of *his* choices.

"I understand that I've never had a film that made $100 million," Lee says, returning to the issue of the big pictures he dreams of making. "I'm not complaining, *Oh, Hollywood won't let me make these movies.* I'll keep doing what I'm doing, I'll bide my time. Marvin Worth bought the rights to *Malcolm X* and waited 25 years before it got made. I'll get the money to make these great films." ■

Anne Thompson's columns can be read at newyorkmetro.com/archive/thompson.

WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING FOR "THE ONE." OR THE SECOND ONE. OR THE THIRD...

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WOMEN

maggie_me

Looking for: A man

Age: 26

Occupation: does not define me

Last great book I read: The Dirty by Motley Crue. Now THAT'S partying like a rock star. Anything else is just imitation.

Most humbling moment: It involved the cafeteria, the fourth grade, my favorite light blue corduroys and sitting on chocolate. I'm not sure I've recovered from that one yet.

sunshinygirl

Looking for: A man

Age: 33

Occupation: advertising copywriter

Favorite on-screen sex scene: Hmm...that's a toughie. I like off-screen sex so much better than on-screen sex.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: Getting ready to go to surf camp... pulling on my bikini and flip flops...

MEN

maxevillage

Looking for: A woman

Age: 35

Occupation: Finance - IT

Song or album that puts me in the mood: curtis mayfield, massive attack, portishead, Beck

The five items I can't live without: classic DVDs, my acoustic, breughel's tiny landscapes, good wine, HBO Sunday night (excluding Arli$$)

truckstopcowboy

Looking for: A man

Age: 33

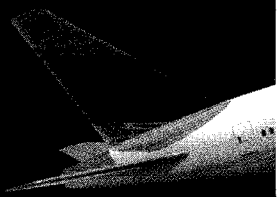
Occupation: Being Occupied

Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: 'Officer, I swear I'm not queer' 'I was just drying my bathing suit' —Explanation after caught speeding coming home from the beach.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: A Nude Beach far away from NYC

ONLINE ON AIR ON PAGE 180

NEW YORK MAGAZINE



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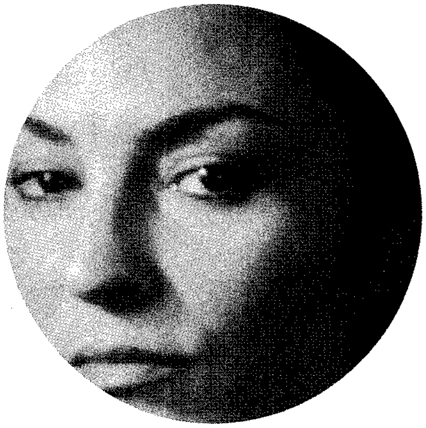
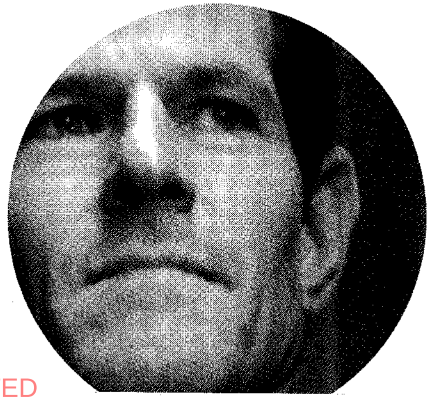
NEW YORK

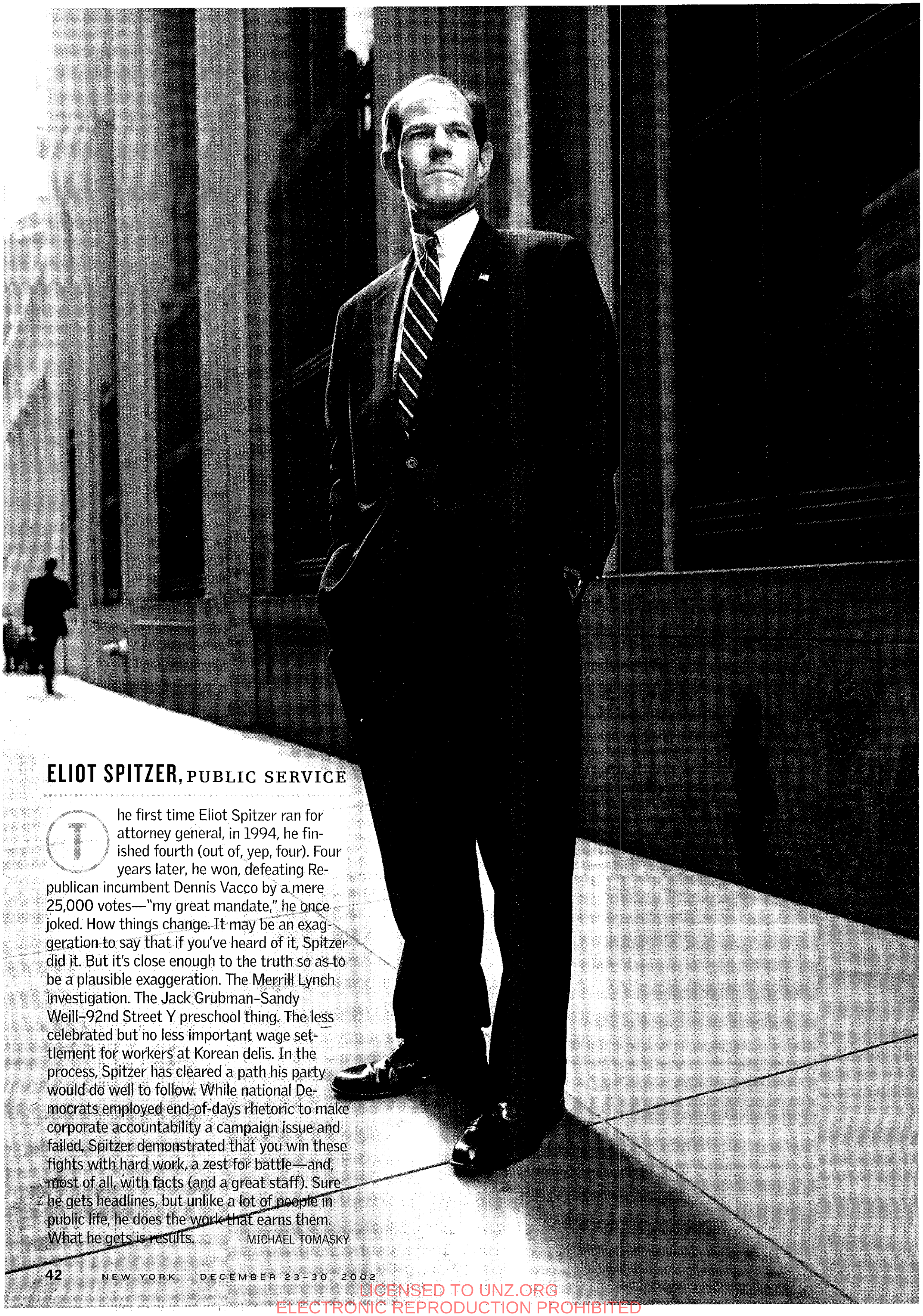
AWARDS



VIBRANT, CREATIVE, EDGY, demanding (only sometimes!), smart, funny. For this year's awards, we've chosen eleven New Yorkers who not only gave us their best but also brought out the best in New York. From Eliot Spitzer's determined drive to clean up the worst of Wall Street excess to Harvey Fierstein's monumental mom—with a heart to match, in *Hairspray*—not to mention Tina Fey's irrepressibly irreverent humor, we salute their vision and celebrate our luck in being here at the right time and, of course, in the right place.

2002





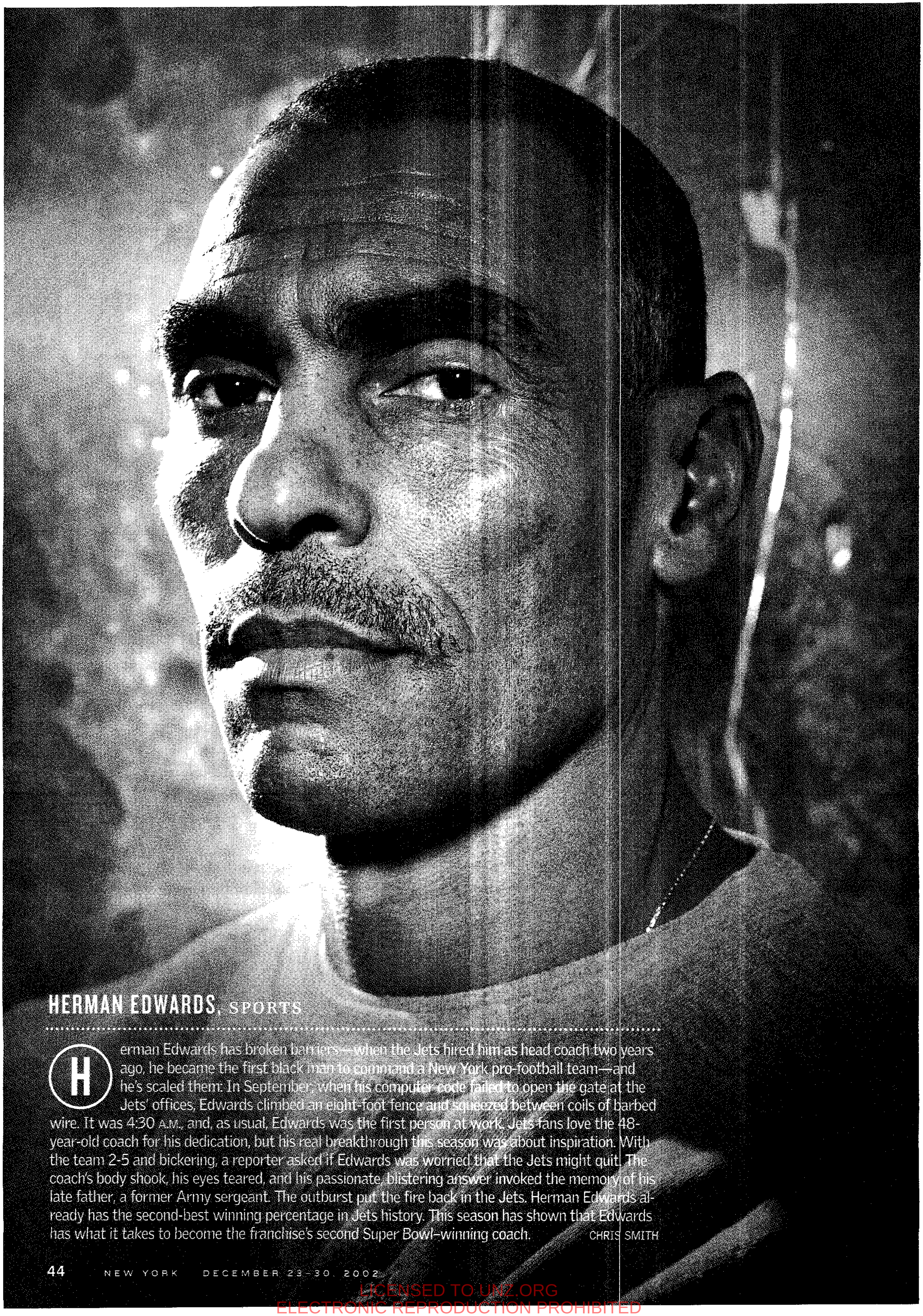
ELIOT SPITZER, PUBLIC SERVICE

The first time Eliot Spitzer ran for attorney general, in 1994, he finished fourth (out of, yep, four). Four years later, he won, defeating Republican incumbent Dennis Vacco by a mere 25,000 votes—"my great mandate," he once joked. How things change. It may be an exaggeration to say that if you've heard of it, Spitzer did it. But it's close enough to the truth so as to be a plausible exaggeration. The Merrill Lynch investigation. The Jack Grubman–Sandy Weill–92nd Street Y preschool thing. The less celebrated but no less important wage settlement for workers at Korean delis. In the process, Spitzer has cleared a path his party would do well to follow. While national Democrats employed end-of-days rhetoric to make corporate accountability a campaign issue and failed, Spitzer demonstrated that you win these fights with hard work, a zest for battle—and, most of all, with facts (and a great staff). Sure he gets headlines, but unlike a lot of people in public life, he does the work that earns them. What he gets is results. MICHAEL TOMASKY

HAIR BY MIKI; MAKEUP BY GENEVIEVE/SALLY HARLOR;
STYLING BY KIM MEEHAN/WALTER SCHUPFER; DRESS BY LUISA BECCARIA

JULIANNE MOORE, MOVIES

The truth, whether we admit it or not, is that we might all be coming a bit undone, what with terror alerts, schizophrenic market news, and Saddam playing hide-and-go-seek with weapons inspectors. Which is why Julianne Moore is an actress for our times. Even before our sense of domestic tranquillity began to evaporate, Moore was famous for etching nuanced cinematic portraits of women on the verge: the drugged-up den mom upholding porn-family values in *Boogie Nights;* the disaffected painter who retaliates (in a famously full-frontal monologue) against her distrustful husband in *Short Cuts;* the wealthy California housewife who becomes violently allergic to, well, life itself in *Safe.* Given her inspired performances in dozens of other fractured fairy tales (*The Big Lebowski, Assassins,* and *Magnolia* among them) and this season's Oscar-beckoning *Far From Heaven* and *The Hours,* it's clear that Moore has devoted herself to piercing the fog (and denial) of the American fever dream. A great actress is only as good as the choices she makes. Julianne Moore has chosen brilliantly. SIMON DUMENCO

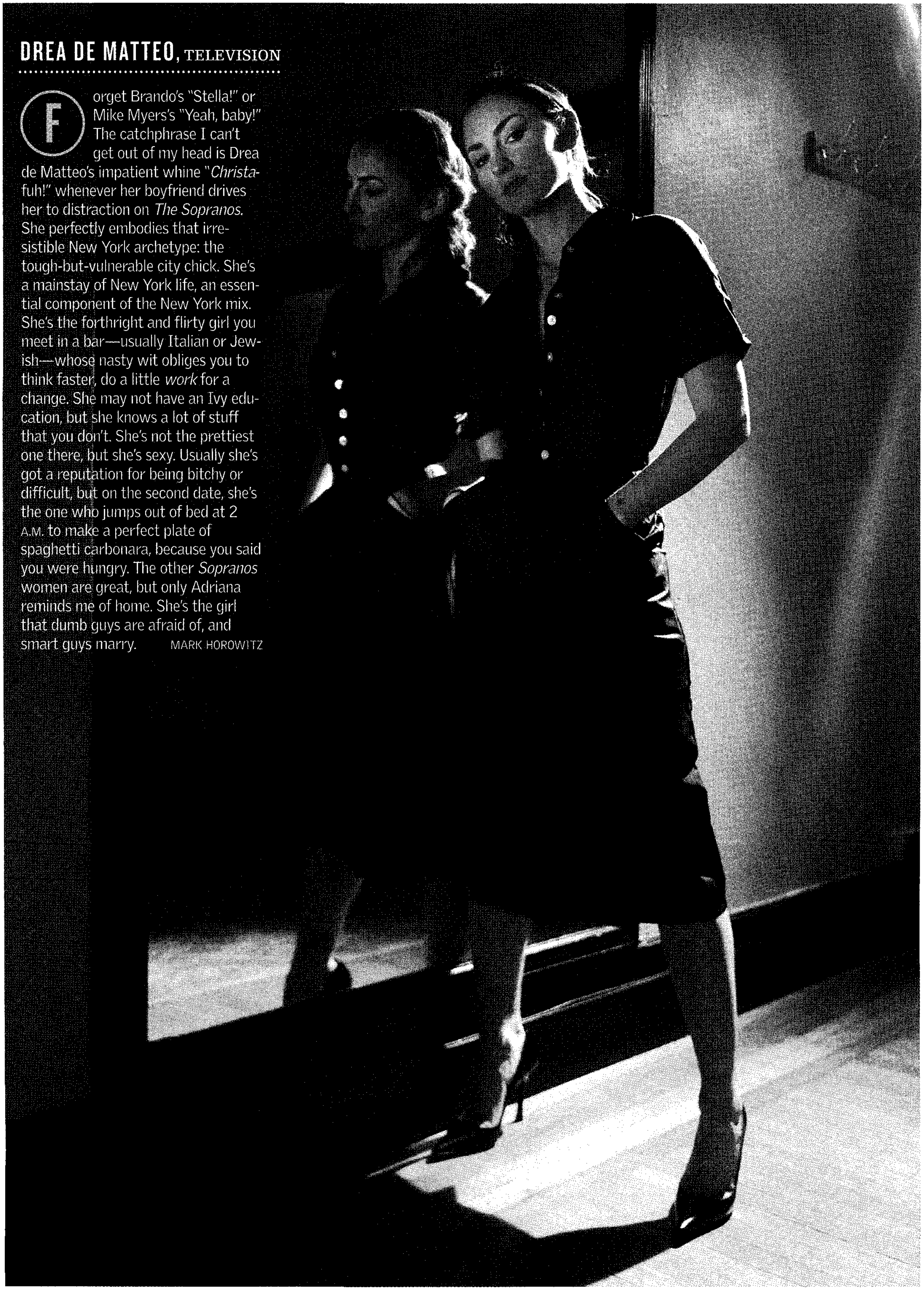


HERMAN EDWARDS, SPORTS

Herman Edwards has broken barriers—when the Jets hired him as head coach two years ago, he became the first black man to command a New York pro-football team—and he's scaled them: In September, when his computer code failed to open the gate at the Jets' offices, Edwards climbed an eight-foot fence and squeezed between coils of barbed wire. It was 4:30 A.M., and, as usual, Edwards was the first person at work. Jets fans love the 48-year-old coach for his dedication, but his real breakthrough this season was about inspiration. With the team 2-5 and bickering, a reporter asked if Edwards was worried that the Jets might quit. The coach's body shook, his eyes teared, and his passionate, blistering answer invoked the memory of his late father, a former Army sergeant. The outburst put the fire back in the Jets. Herman Edwards already has the second-best winning percentage in Jets history. This season has shown that Edwards has what it takes to become the franchise's second Super Bowl–winning coach. CHRIS SMITH

DREA DE MATTEO, TELEVISION

Forget Brando's "Stella!" or Mike Myers's "Yeah, baby!" The catchphrase I can't get out of my head is Drea de Matteo's impatient whine "*Christa-fuh!*" whenever her boyfriend drives her to distraction on *The Sopranos.* She perfectly embodies that irresistible New York archetype: the tough-but-vulnerable city chick. She's a mainstay of New York life, an essential component of the New York mix. She's the forthright and flirty girl you meet in a bar—usually Italian or Jewish—whose nasty wit obliges you to think faster, do a little *work* for a change. She may not have an Ivy education, but she knows a lot of stuff that you don't. She's not the prettiest one there, but she's sexy. Usually she's got a reputation for being bitchy or difficult, but on the second date, she's the one who jumps out of bed at 2 A.M. to make a perfect plate of spaghetti carbonara, because you said you were hungry. The other *Sopranos* women are great, but only Adriana reminds me of home. She's the girl that dumb guys are afraid of, and smart guys marry. MARK HOROWITZ



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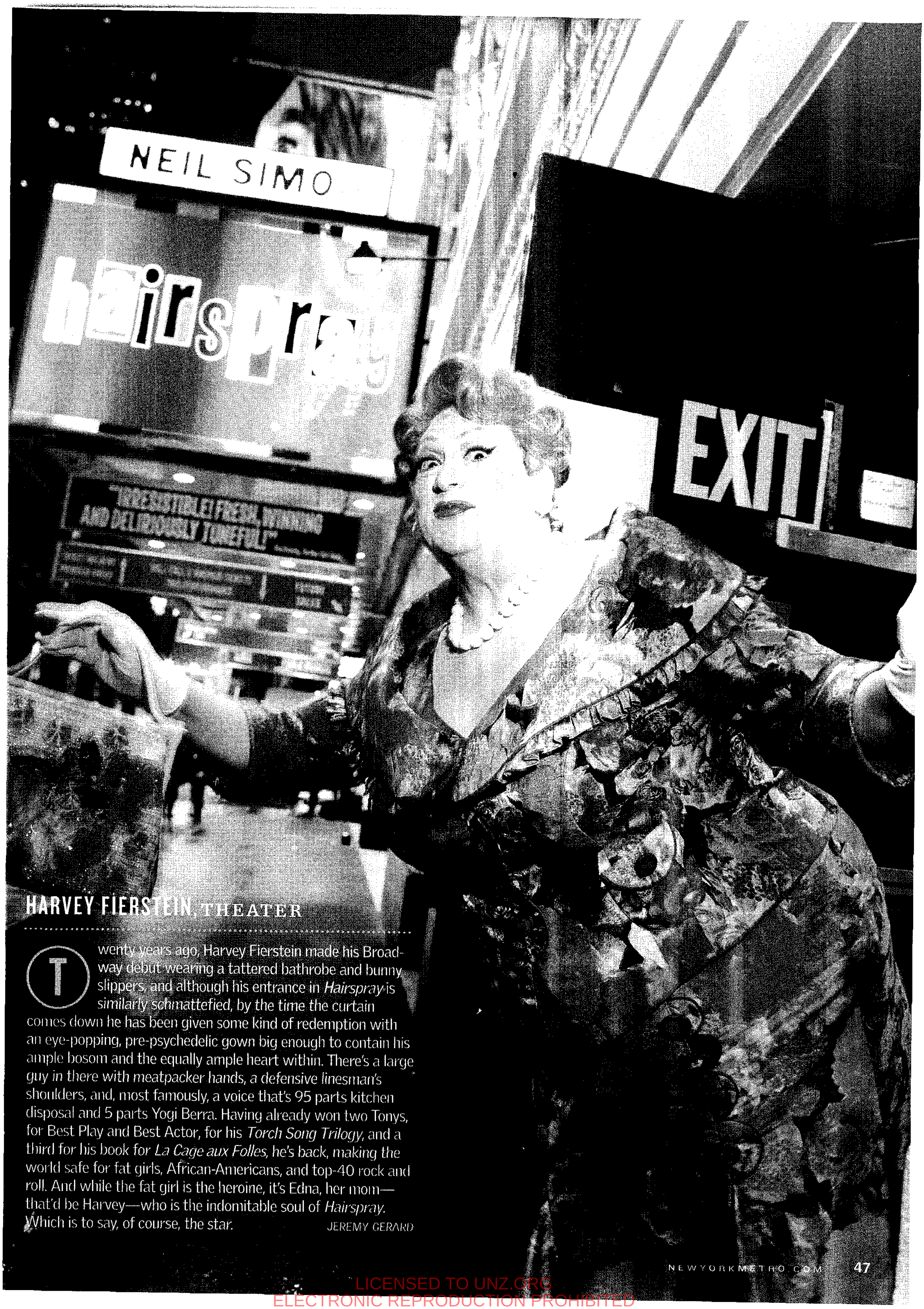
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EXIT

HARVEY FIERSTEIN, THEATER

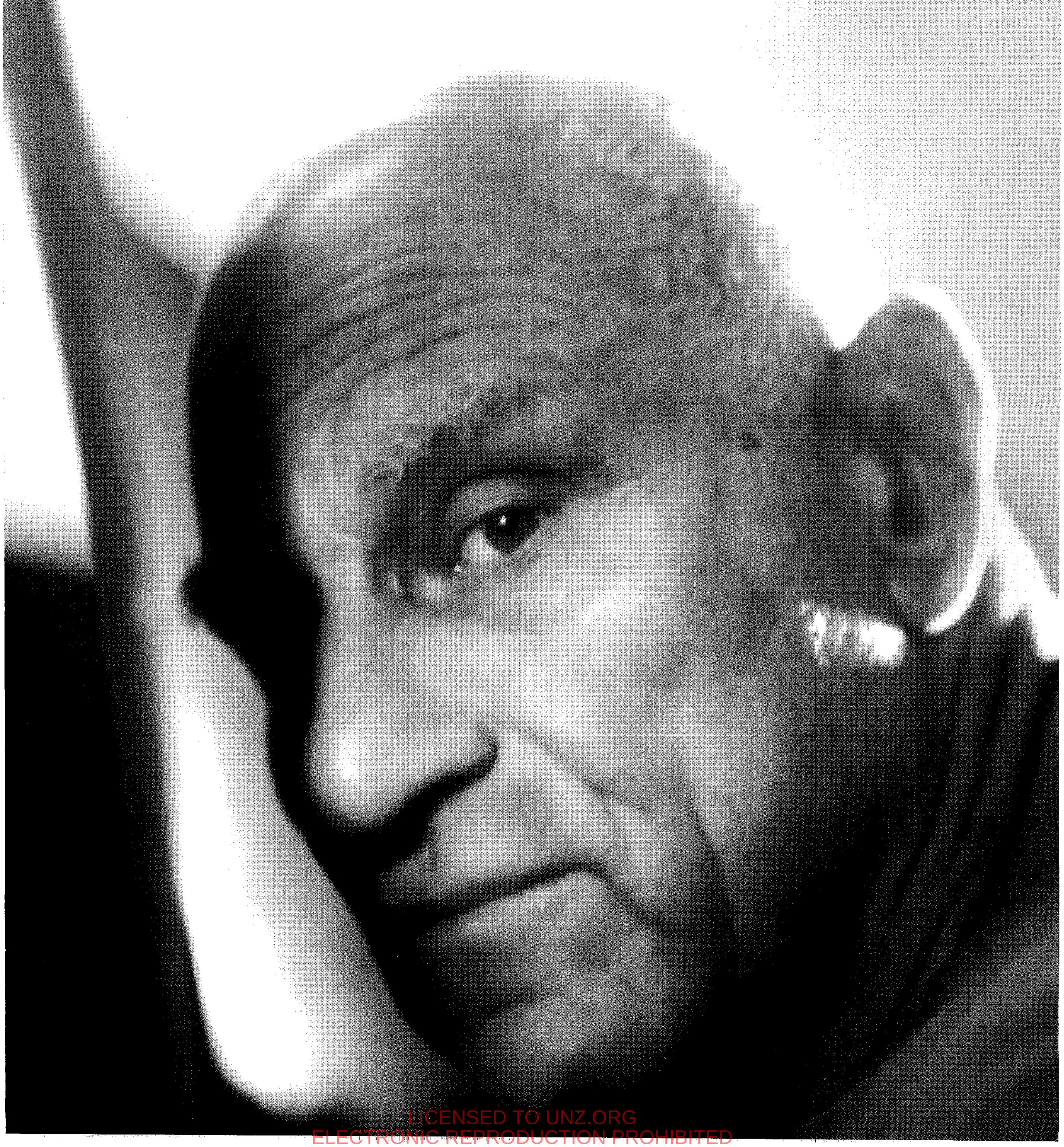
Twenty years ago, Harvey Fierstein made his Broadway debut wearing a tattered bathrobe and bunny slippers, and although his entrance in *Hairspray* is similarly schmattefied, by the time the curtain comes down he has been given some kind of redemption with an eye-popping, pre-psychedelic gown big enough to contain his ample bosom and the equally ample heart within. There's a large guy in there with meatpacker hands, a defensive linesman's shoulders, and, most famously, a voice that's 95 parts kitchen disposal and 5 parts Yogi Berra. Having already won two Tonys, for Best Play and Best Actor, for his *Torch Song Trilogy*, and a third for his book for *La Cage aux Folles*, he's back, making the world safe for fat girls, African-Americans, and top-40 rock and roll. And while the fat girl is the heroine, it's Edna, her mom—that'd be Harvey—who is the indomitable soul of *Hairspray*. Which is to say, of course, the star. JEREMY GERARD

TINA FEY, COMEDY

It's written in the airwaves: *Surrender, Dorothy Parker.* Five blocks north of Parker's beloved Algonquin, on a Rockefeller Center soundstage, a new queen of New York is consolidating her power. Parker had her round table; Tina Fey of *Saturday Night Live* has the "Weekend Update" desk. Parker had Benchley; Fey has Fallon. Like Parker, Fey invaded the misogynistic world of comedy—she was the first female head writer in *Saturday Night Live*'s history, whence she ascended to her on-air post. "Weekend Update" is a deadpan form, but unlike the classic "Weekend Update"s of Dan Aykroyd and Jane ("ignorant slut") Curtin, Fey likes to let the audience in on the joke. Her mobile mouth curls on one side to show sarcasm, then smiles wider, in comic overdrive, showing that the sarcasm is itself a goof. Fey often seems both on the verge of laughter—and delighted to be funny, which is part of her charm. Humor that doesn't come out of bitterness. Parker might have said: What's *that* about? JOHN HOMANS

RICHARD SERRA, ART

Once upon a time, there existed a consensus on what modernism was. It was form. Or rather, those examples of painting, sculpture, and architecture that inverted the old idea that form served content, and insisted instead that form *was* content. Comparatively few artists believe this now, but one who does is Richard Serra. In his case, form is not the perfection of some preconceived ideal but a result of the decisive physical manipulation of materials. The "figure" so many people claim they miss in Serra's abstract sculpture is the viewer; the human form they struggle to find is their own presence. Thus intending to reveal them to themselves, Serra has, over the years, confronted the public with huge propped panels and elegantly curved but utterly opaque rusted walls. Lately, by contrast, he has embraced viewers in towering corridors and sweeping spirals that majestically make room for reflection in the tumult of the city. But whether Serra's sculptural gesture is challenging or welcoming, his work uncompromisingly affirms the principle that form speaks. He is our master space-carver. ROBERT STORR



ADAM HASLETT [illegible]

With his debut collection of short stories, *You Are Not a Stranger Here,* Adam Haslett arrives from out of nowhere sounding like a master. The opening tour de force, "Notes to My Biographer," is a first-person riff from a bipolar narrator in full manic mode, showing all the flash and energy we demand of a brilliant new voice. *Yup,* you say—BNV. But what's more surprising is the subtlety with which successive stories probe the psychological mysteries and relationships of an astonishingly diverse array of characters—gay and straight, children and senior citizens, Americans and Brits, institutionalized and free-range. How many lives has this guy led? Is he the love child of William Trevor and Eudora Welty? Every one of these stories feels like an original; each takes us to a surprising destination. A writer this good should be given the last word. Here are some of Haslett's own, ripped out of context, which to me are evocative of the role of fiction in our lives: "Ted doesn't see this familiar landscape as a present fact, but already as a memory, a scene he will one day recall. It's strange and exciting to perceive things from such a distance. He glimpses how beautiful even this world can be if you aren't actually in it." JAY MCINERNEY

CASSANDRA WILSON, MUSIC

Cassandra Wilson can feel the past and see the future. She also has the voice and the intelligence to carry listeners along on her eclectic journey from the Delta blues, through Abbey Lincoln and the Monkees, and up into some distant sci-fi galaxy. This year's Wilson album, *Belly of the Sun*, was characteristically seductive and expansive, including tunes from Dylan, Jobim, and Robert Johnson and backing that ranged from bouzouki to a Manhattan children's choir. Critics complain that Wilson is more jazzy than jazz, but the 47-year-old thankfully isn't listening. Raised in Jackson, Mississippi, Wilson moved to Harlem in the early eighties and now lives with her 13-year-old son in Tribeca. "Harlem is the center of the black universe," she says. "And my music is based on doing justice to what I came from, keeping the ancestors always in mind, but also remembering that jazz has to be a current music for its survival. It has to be grounded in our lives as they are today. Living in New York, you're surrounded by the history and by the now." CHRIS SMITH

BILLY JOEL,
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Billy Joel has always been a punk rocker. A ridiculous claim for the most successful American songwriter since Irving Berlin, but since his 1971 debut, the bard of Bay Shore has written more than the romantic ballads to future ex-wives, notably the Valentine's Day standard "Just the Way You Are," that put him on the radio. His fist-shaking albums were full of urban apocalypse and a mistrust of love, family, the media, nostalgia, and religion—all later embraced by the Sex Pistols and the Clash.

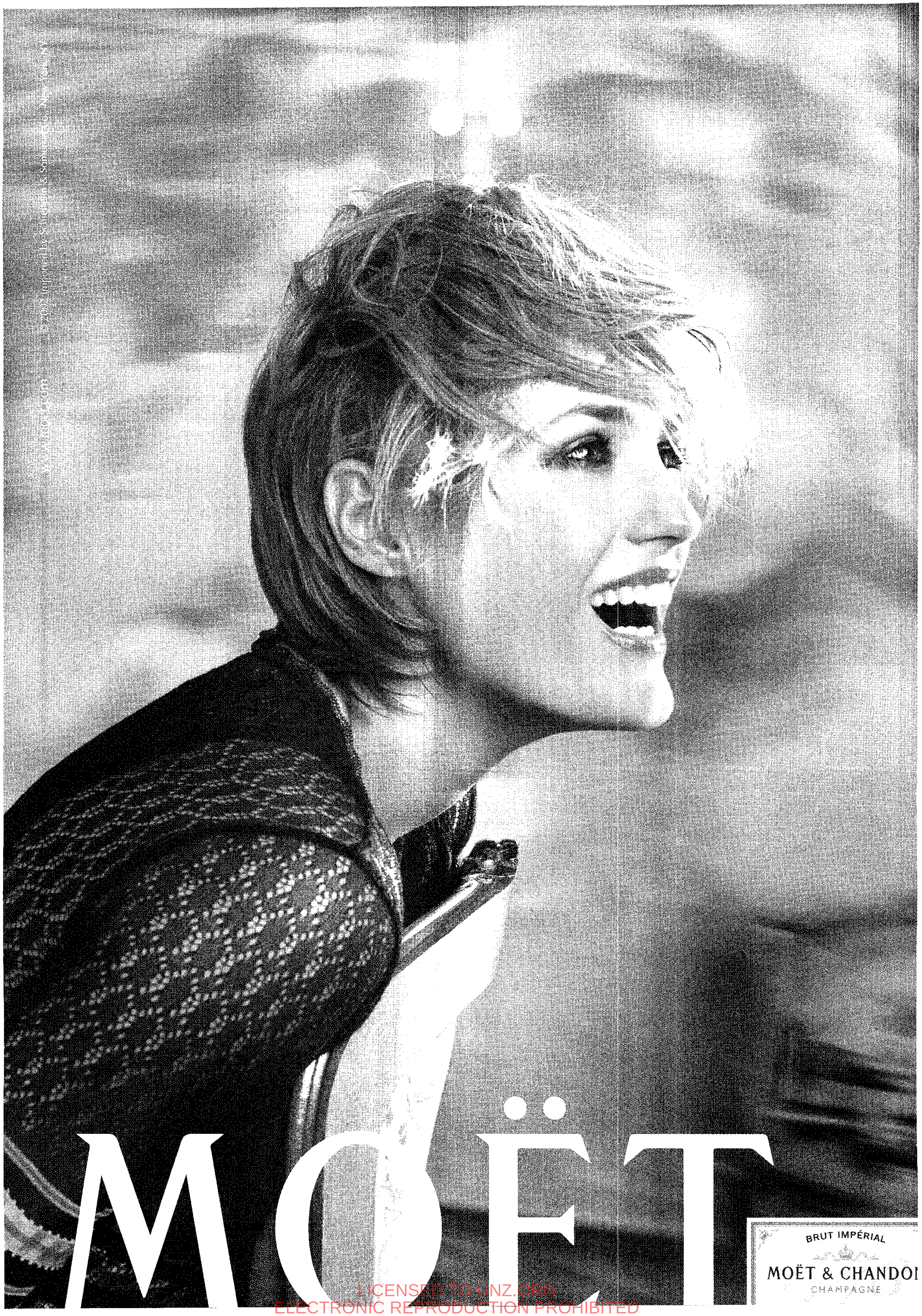
William Martin Joel, 53—Yankees fan, Hamptons fixture, indignant multimillionaire—could not have come from anywhere but here. He talks with a Long Island bray that makes *artsy-fartsy* rhyme with *hotsy-totsy.* Since he merges Beatles with Broadway, Twyla Tharp's idea to stage a baby-boomer musical from his songs makes perfect sense. Typically, Joel's first response was a suspicious *Get lost.* Now he loves *Movin' Out* so much he sometimes joins the cast onstage. Shameless, sentimental, combative, and durable, Billy Joel is a punk the way that every New Yorker is a punk. ROB TANNENBAUM

Twyla
Twyla

TWYLA THARP,

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

She's always been an uptown girl. Back when the avant-garde prized stark, cerebral evenings of unadorned choreography, and *bleak* was a term of praise, Twyla Tharp and her dancers were tearing into Mozart, Torelli, Jelly Roll Morton, and Bix Beiderbecke with the supremely casual virtuosity that would become her trademark. She wasn't the first modern dancer to explore ballet, but she was the first crossover artist to stop crossing over and simply unite the two camps in her choreography. So what if ballet and modern had been at war for decades? Tharp wanted access to everything. She also wanted jazz, soft-shoe, tap, rock, hip-hop, boxing, and baton-twirling, not to mention tight-rope walking; and she's deployed all of them over nearly four decades of peerless dance-making. *Movin' Out*, with Billy Joel's songs and Tharp's choreography, started as the kind of challenge she likes best: huge, uncharted, probably doomed. By opening night, she had redefined the Broadway musical, slathering the stage with rigorous, ravishing dance that tells a story while burning deep into the imagination. Next comes—whatever comes next. We'll be there. LAURA SHAPIRO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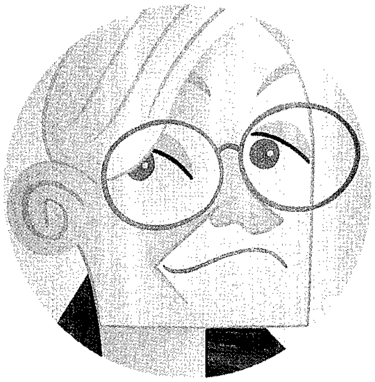
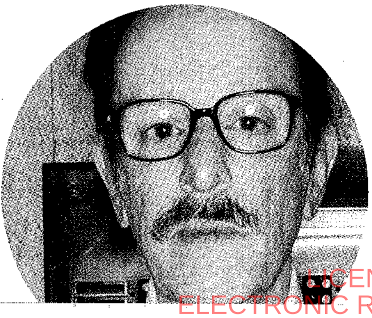
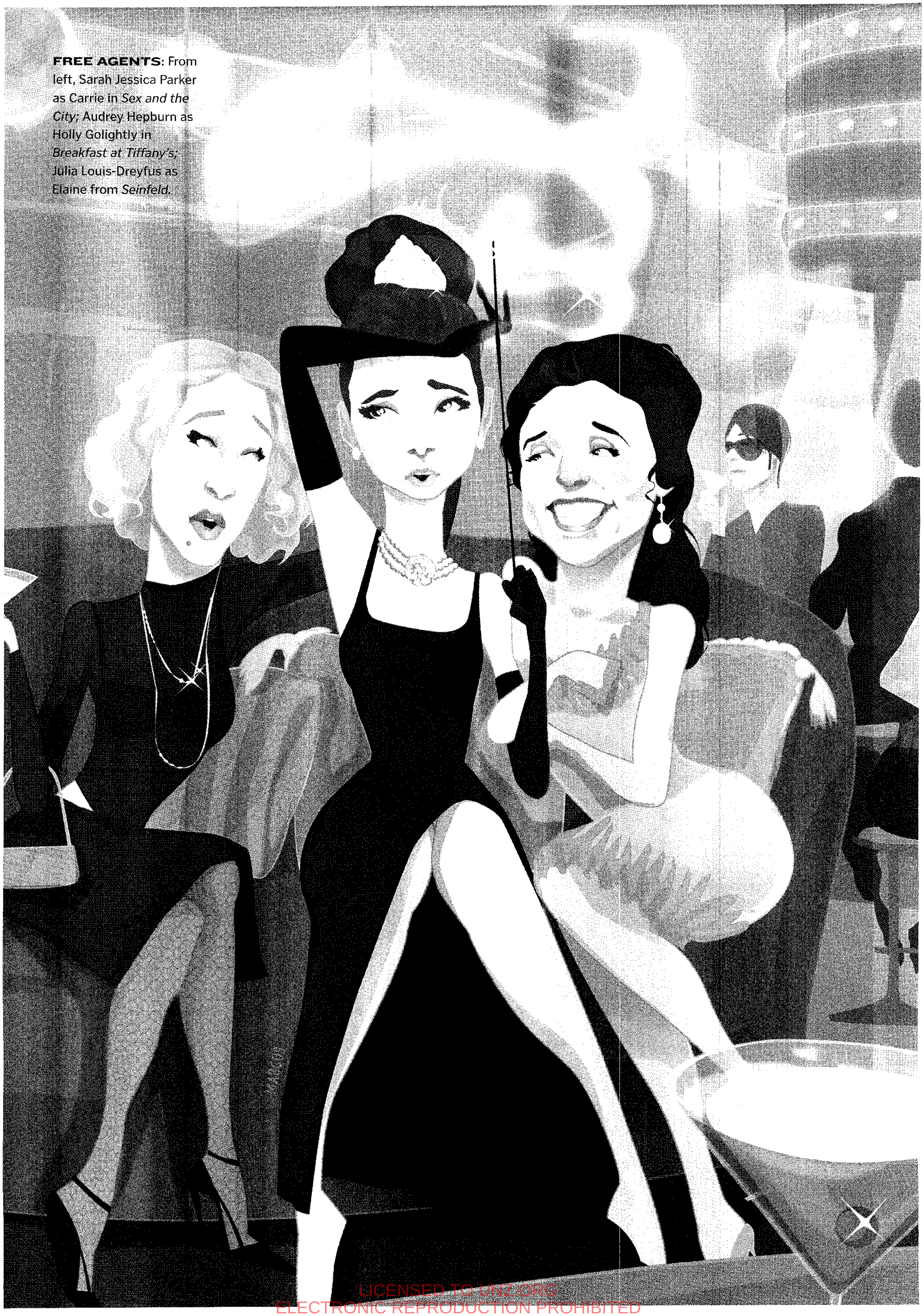
MOËT
BRUT IMPÉRIAL
MOËT & CHANDO
CHAMPAGNE

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK HARD to catch a glimpse of classic New York. Just do what the tourists do: Look up. But tourists, being tourists, see only the landmarks. What really makes the city constant over time is not so much the bricks and mortar but what's inscribed in the city's DNA: the people, the institutions, the ways of life that may evolve over time but remain unmistakably New York. They reflect our values, the truths—and, okay, the myths—we hold self-evident about ourselves. We asked a wide range of writers to explore the blueprint of the city—from the Single Girl to the Shrink, from the power-lunch spot to the white-box art gallery. Whether they've ventured far back into the past or simply walked out their front door, they've come back with a portrait of the city you'll recognize. This is because Classic New York has always been up to the minute. That's what makes the city great.



CLASSIC NEW YORK





FREE AGENTS: From left, Sarah Jessica Parker as Carrie in *Sex and the City;* Audrey Hepburn as Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's;* Julia Louis-Dreyfus as Elaine from *Seinfeld.*

THE SINGLE GIRL

THE CITY WILL ALWAYS HAVE ITS CARRIE BRADSHAWS, WRITES **ARIEL LEVY**, SO THE REST OF US CAN FEED OFF HER GLAMOUR.

In a city that loves striving, the romance of the single girl in New York has always been about her quest—the identifying characteristic of her situation is her perky struggle to get out of it. The married may be mired in boredom, parenthood, pajamas, but the single girl's only groom is her ideal (if imaginary) other half: While others sit at home in the comfort and dullness of reality, she is forever out on the town, searching the New York night for true love. But the single girl has more to show for her troubles than the honor of holding out. Fortunately for her, the lows of her lifestyle have become just as romanticized as the highs. (Since the advent of *Sex and the City*, it is well nigh impossible for the single girl to do anything—brunch, e-mail, sob—*un*glamorously.) Heading home alone high-heeled from a bad date to indulge in phone reports, smoking, and toenail-painting is almost as crucial to the fantasy of the lone colt in the city as heading home plus one from a good date to indulge in nightcaps, smoking, and creative positions. Throughout the history of New York, the reigning single girl has been literary (Dorothy Parker, Candace Bushnell), comedic-neurotic (Barbra Streisand in *Funny Girl*, Marsha Mason in *The Goodbye Girl*, Julia Louis-Dreyfus in *Seinfeld*), cinematic (Clara Bow, Audrey Hepburn, Melanie Griffith), and broadly iconic (the Shop Girl, the New Woman, the Flapper, the Career Girl). She has sipped from a martini, a Cosmo, a flute of champagne. She has worn a bob (circa 1920) or a Rachel (circa 1998). She has been Bianca Jagger, riding into Studio 54 in a white dress on a white horse, and she has been Carrie Bradshaw, bumping into (a married) Mr. Big onboard a ship at a magazine launch. She has traded her beauty and company for dinner and baubles (Holly Golightly, Lily Bart), or she has been determined and self-reliant (working as a stenographer at *Collier's*, a D-girl at Miramax). She has been a sexual opportunist (Edna St. Vincent Millay, Jessica Stein) or a reluctant celibate (Miranda on *SATC*) cheered by the camaraderie of similarly attractive-witty-resilient single-girl friends. The role is too crucial to evaporate; it simply shifts shape to fit the urban moment. But no matter her incarnation, the allure of the single girl is in her lonely nights as much as in her happy days. In our city, in our fantasy, even when she loses, she wins.

MONEY TALKS: Cash has the effect of reducing everything else to a joke—and traders laugh.

THE TRADER

PENIS JOKES, FRAT-BOY HIGH JINKS, ACRONYM HELL—THEY'RE ALL IN A DAY'S WORK, WRITES **JAMES J. CRAMER**.

Traders are ruder than the French if you attempt to speak their language and botch it. When I broke in at Goldman Sachs, I dreaded sitting on the trading desk. "Size to go, U-Tex, Ranch-sized buyer I-Beam, I'll make Intel 18 to a quarter 200 up?" It's a code, a code that exists only in stocks. You don't put in a bid in stocks; you hit a bid. You don't buy; you take. I-Beam was and is IBM. UTX is United Technologies—pronounced U-Tex because that's how a third-grader would pronounce it, like Texas Instruments being Texan because of its TXN symbol. Acronymic hell.

Traders are obsessed with size and defining size in clever graphic ways. Knowing the "size" is every-

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER

"Would ya lay off? When my mother dies, I'll give you the job."

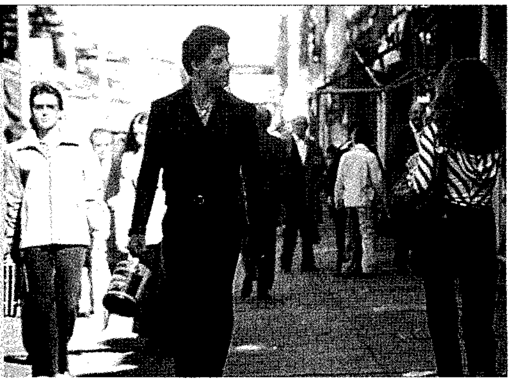


ILLUSTRATION BY MARCOS CHIN/AGOODSON.COM

The skyline . . . neurosis . . . "Stand clear of the closing doors" . . . Shakespeare in the Park . . . the penthouse . . . pickles . . . very wealthy small children . . . the docents at the Met . . . seltzer . . . parties where everyone's wearing black . . . "Page Six" . . . getting busslushed . . . the fine distinction among bodegas, delis, and corner stores . . . the knish . . . at 5 P.M., Town Cars lined up two deep in front of corporate buildings . . . Art Deco . . . standing under the Washington Square Park arch with its decrepit statue of George Washington and gazing up Fifth Avenue . . . "I'm on the list" . . . the beat cop . . . famous people at the newsstand early in the morning so they can be the first to read their reviews . . . apartment envy . . . Ed Koch . . . spending the day sitting in the Cloisters' medieval garden . . . illegally tapping fire hydrants . . . Fairway . . . hanging out in the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's tropical greenhouses in the winter . . . the Chelsea Hotel . . . the Oyster Bar . . . free science educations: Stuyvesant, Bronx Science, Brooklyn Tech and Cooper Union

thing. "What kind of size you looking at?" "Can you fit in 200?" "Sizola size, like seven-figure size." Of course, the obsession with size spills over to penis and breast size without hesitation.

I learned the language from John Lattanzio, the boss of my fiancée (now wife), Karen Backfisch, who is known not as the Trading Goddess but as the T.G., because it takes too long to say Trading Goddess, and time's money. Everything's money. Lattanzio—who called me Small Dick because of the meager assets I ran and the tiny trades I was doing—remains a larger-than-life master of trading cant. After year three, he stopped calling me Small Dick, something that I regarded as terrific because I thought soon I would be S.D. among his friends—instead, he insisted I was Jimmy. Of course, I explained to him that only my late mother ever called me that, which is the way I liked it. "Fine," he said—and then called me nothing but Jimmy for the next fifteen years.

Lattanz knew that the cadence of true Wall Street gibberish must be kept rapid at all times. Sometimes, just to torture traders, he would speak an order so fast that he knew the trader wouldn't get it: "Shoe"—for Lou the Shoe, of course—"take 250,000 fdkhkjhfdkjhd, i top," he would growl. Then he would instruct all of the other traders, including my wife, "Don't pick up the Shoe when the light starts blinking." He would let Shoe ring again and again just to cause angst, a hysterically funny trading joke unless, of course, you were the Shoe.

JOE TORRE

"Walking down Fifth Avenue at Christmastime, past St. Patrick's Cathedral, then to the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center—to me, it brings out a type of unique human spirit that can only be found here."

Traders love the puerile. If you acted out when you had a substitute teacher, you could have had a career in trading. I can't tell you how many times a trader has called whatever woman is on the desk for the first time and said, "Hey, *hon*, could you yell out to Lattanz that Mike Hunt's on the line?" No matter how many EEOC complaints get filed, I think Mike Hunt will still be calling long after women rule. (In fact, 'Who's Dick Hertz?' is probably still the fave inquiry of most trading shops.) It's too bad traders can't be taken right out of fourth grade and put on the desks, fresh from watching *Three Stooges* episodes. But then again, would fourth-graders know enough anatomy to take it to the more brutal levels? A good question we'll never know the answer to.

THE PUNK

FOR A CERTAIN BREED OF **NEW YORK KID**, IT'S ALWAYS EIGHTIES NIGHT.

What do you define as punk?
For me, it's always been about the music. Punk shares some of my beliefs—that what everyone else does doesn't influence you, because you're doing your own thing.

How did you get into the music and the lifestyle?
Through mainstream bands like Rancid and Agnostic Front. You start with the Clash—they're pretty old but pretty well known—also the Dead Kennedys and the Germs. My friends and I started cutting mohawks in eighth grade. We were looked at extra weird. The school administration were jerks, especially after that whole Columbine thing. But back in the eighties, people were shocked by the punk-rockers, and now they laugh because they're used to it, like "Ha ha, look at this dick's hair." It sort of defeats the whole idea.

Do you have any ideals that are traditionally punk? Are you an activist?
People sometimes think they're better than someone else, because they're, for example, vegan. I like eating meat. And I'm against corporate takeover, but I also don't see what the protests are doing. These people are trying to save the world, and I don't believe it can be saved. People who try to force their ideals on others can kiss my ass. Who made them Admiral Punk?

Would you rather have been a punk during its heyday in the eighties?
Maybe if they did an *It's a Wonderful Life* thing, and I saw what it would be like if I were eighties Kevin, but I can't miss it unless I taste it. Though I do wish I could see the Clash or Reagan Youth. I believe I'm carrying a torch. We're the new generation. I didn't learn everything I know from eighties punks, but if it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be where I am.

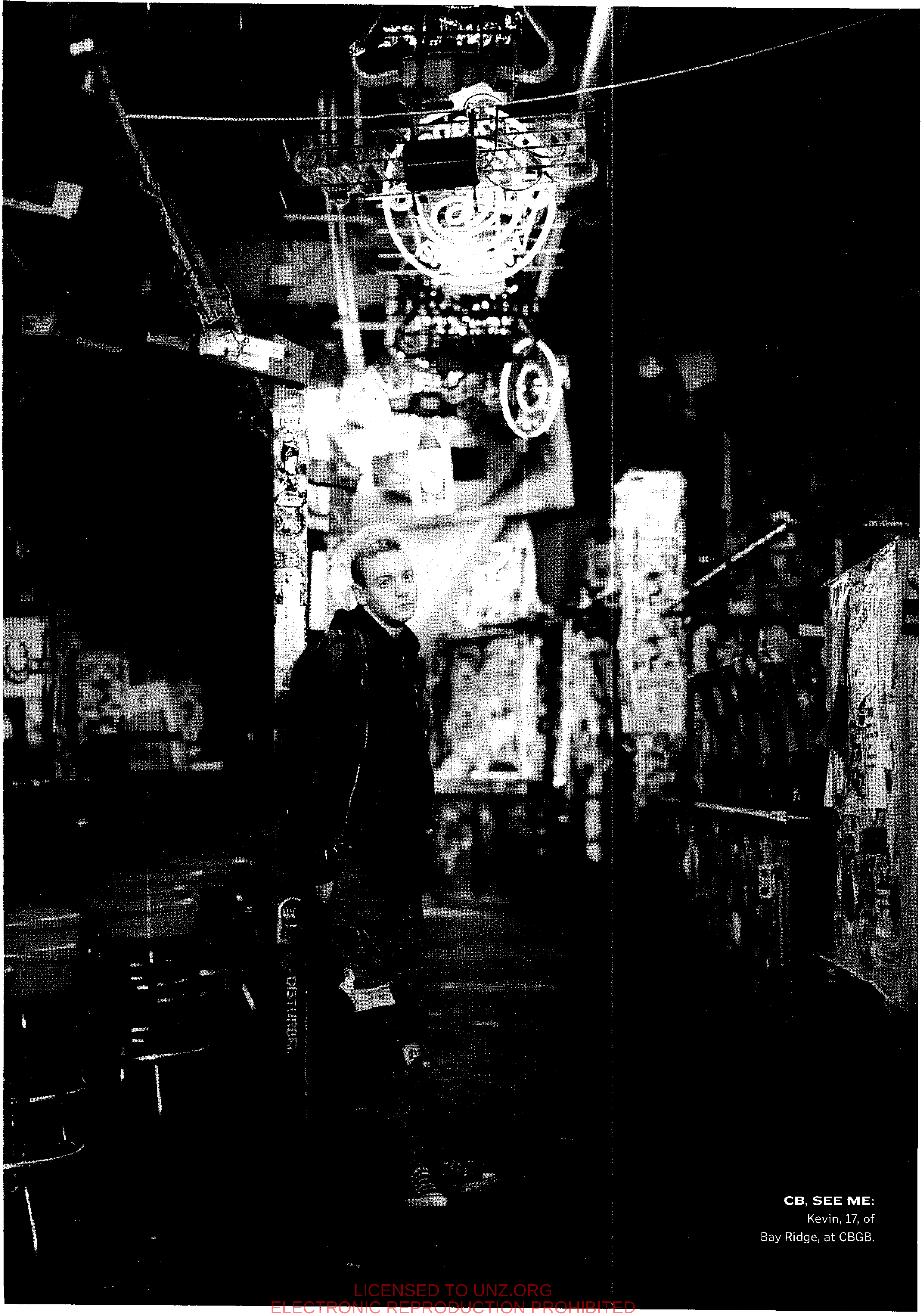
Do you think you'll always be into punk?
Yeah. I have these plaid pants, and when I'm an old man, they'll be handy when I go golfing.

MONICA KHEMSUROV

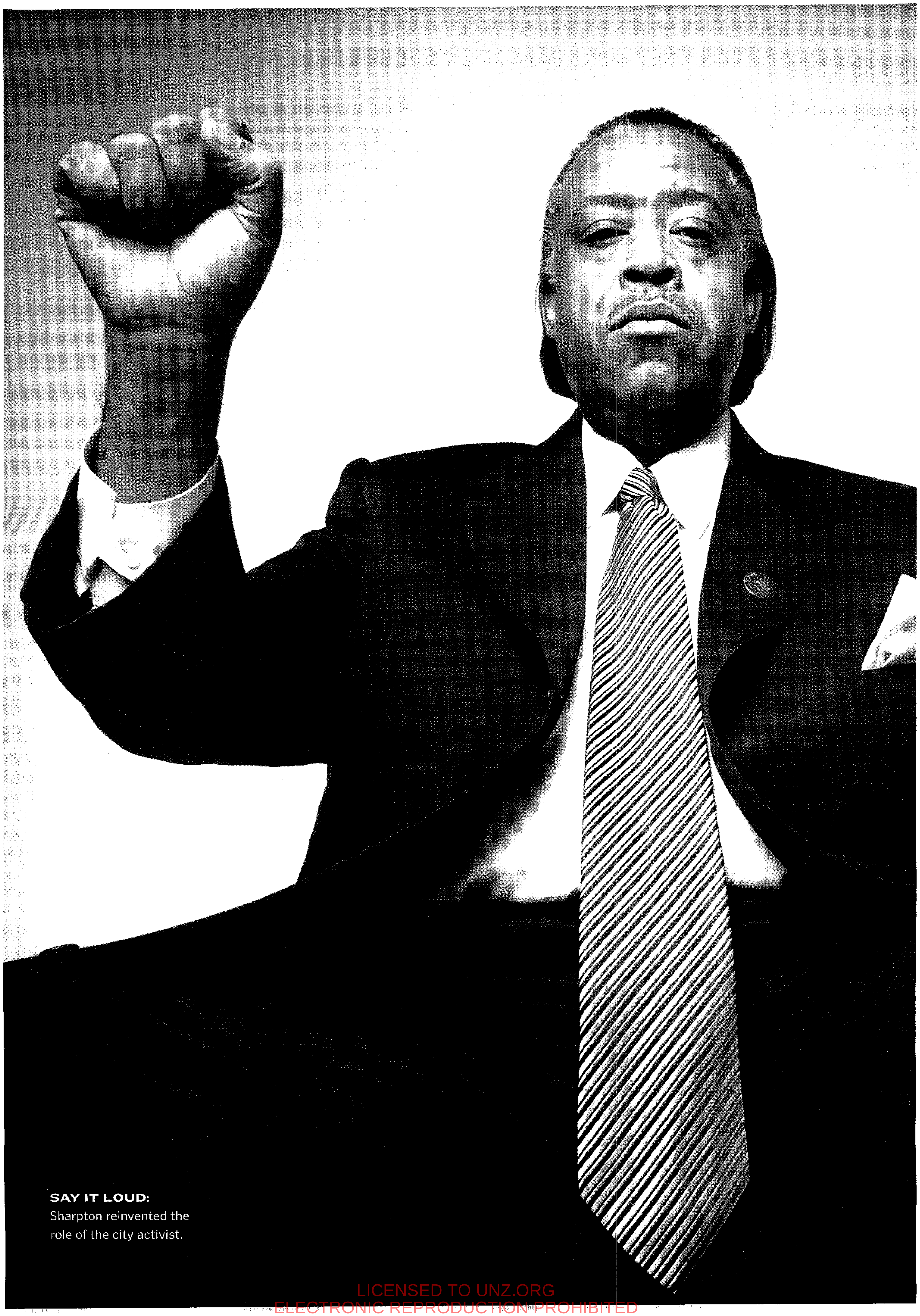
THE THIN MAN

Reporter: "Well, can't you tell us anything about the case?" Nick: "Yes. It's putting me way behind in my drinking."

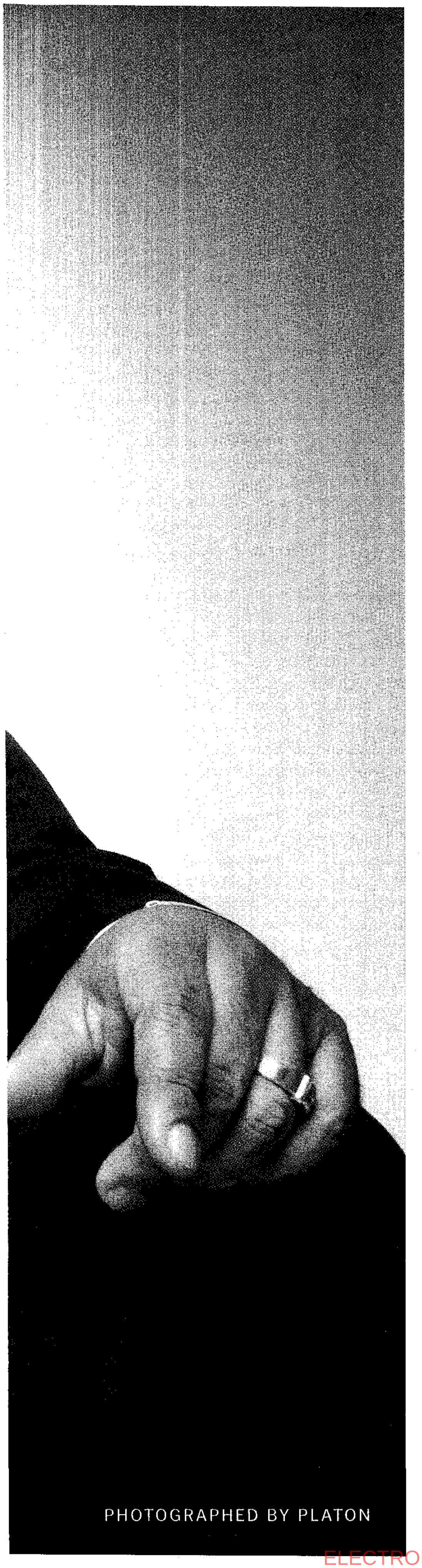
PHOTOGRAPHED BY ETHAN HILL



CB, SEE ME: Kevin, 17, of Bay Ridge, at CBGB.



SAY IT LOUD:
Sharpton reinvented the role of the city activist.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY PLATON

THE AGITATOR

GO AHEAD, CALL HIM A LOUDMOUTH. **AL SHARPTON** DOESN'T MIND—IT JUST PROVES YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING.

If someone called you an agitator, what would you say?
Thank you very much. You know, Frederick Douglass said, "Agitate, agitate, agitate." And I'm very proud to do that. I think that in the short run, you get criticized—"Aw, you just self-promoting," "Aw, you just exacerbating"—but history will say had we not done that, there probably never would have been review of police-community affairs. There would have never been special prosecutors with Howard Beach.

Howard Beach propelled you into history—and literature. Did you like *The Bonfire of the Vanities*?
I didn't read it. And the reason I never read it was that I felt that if they were going to loosely try to have a preacher activist around me, they could at least have Mr. Wolfe send me a free copy. I always resented that.

You like to say that your brand of self-promotion is no different from, say, Donald Trump's. Is this kind of horn-blowing a New York thing?
I always say, though I studied under Dr. King, and more directly under Reverend Jackson, in New York you compete with more people than in Atlanta and Chicago. Eight million people, Broadway lights—how do you get their attention?

Was there a New Yorker like you before you?
Adam Clayton Powell. It *all* started with Adam, the quintessential black New Yorker of the *first* part of the twentieth century.

Which makes you the quintessential black New Yorker of the . . .
Late twentieth, early twenty-first century? I would think I *approach* that, if I'm not that. In order to understand Al Sharpton, you *have* to understand Adam Clayton Powell. Here was this tall, black, controversial minister-politician that even movie stars respected. I remember he went to do *The David Frost Show,* and Adam had on a black turtleneck and medallion—in fact, I got the

. . . rich ladies with small dogs on Madison Avenue . . . East Village residents glaring at preppy NYU students . . . gypsy cabs . . . the Blessing of the Animals at St. John the Divine . . . bars in converted banks, beauty salons, libraries, and pharmacies . . . the Children's Aid Society . . . that first warm day in spring when suddenly everyone's walking around nearly naked . . . handing off an unused transfer to someone waiting for the bus . . . figuring out how much money your friends make . . . rent control . . . "My friend's band is playing CB's tonight" . . . everything bagels . . . the Learning Annex . . . Macy's Santa . . . elderly salesmen in blue blazers and tattersall shirts at Brooks Brothers . . . peddlers selling knockoff Gucci bags a block away from stores selling real Gucci bags . . . break-dancers on the L train . . . supermodels dancing at nightclubs . . . glitzy book parties . . . people who care about Woody Allen movies . . . calculating infinity not as grains of sand but as germs in the subway . . . Serendipity 3 . . . your building's super fixing everything between

ANNIE HALL

"Don't you see? The rest of the country looks upon New York like we're left-wing, communist, Jewish, homosexual pornographers. I think of us that way sometimes, and I live here."

PHOTOGRAPH (RIGHT) BY PHOTOFEST.

Thanksgiving and Christmas . . . corned beef or pastrami on rye . . . going to three movies in one day during the summer to keep out of the heat . . . stiff penalties for parking illegally . . . the World's Fair site at Flushing Meadow . . . rats running out at you from empty lots . . . the Grill Room at the Four Seasons . . . lying about your address to get your kid into a better public school . . . the Brooklyn Heights Promenade . . . Pete Hamill . . . scaffolding . . . the formerly famous . . . the dozens of fiercely competitive Indian restaurants on East 6th Street . . . the slice . . . the stage door . . . being arch . . . Spanglish . . . Ellis Island . . . Katz's . . . Nathan's . . . art students sitting on the floor of the Met with sketchbooks . . . Wigstock . . . blintzes . . . the packed "secret" bar . . . secretaries on the subway wearing power suits with panty hose, socks, and sneakers . . . the homeless shelter . . . token vs. MetroCard . . . smokers outside office buildings . . . gentrification like a tide that goes in and out . . . jay-walking as a sport . . . competing live

medallion thing from Powell! But anyway, David Frost said, "How would Adam Clayton Powell describe Adam Clayton Powell?" And he looked at him, he says, "I'm the only man in America, black or white, that just doesn't give a damn about what people think." I remember I was backstage. I said, *Man, I'd like to be like that!* I mean, *totally*. The *flamboyance*, the *cockiness*, the *effectiveness*. Knowing *when* to play *what* role. *All* New York.

You're going national now, running for president. Haven't you benefited from the city's economic boom in the nineties?

Yeah. I think that *is* an irony—though I am known for protest, I also benefit from the success of some of the people I protested. *And* I'm also happy about it!

You and Rudy ought to talk about that one day.

I don't know. I mean, I've lived to break bread with Ed Koch—and even work on a program. I don't know if Rudy and I will *ever* live long enough.

ROBERT KOLKER

SUSAN SARANDON

"It's the New York kids you can't find anywhere else—downtown kids with their overdeveloped senses of humor, their wise-ass remarks, their irony. They're survivors. You can't fake a New York kid."

THE DOORMAN

THOSE SILENT SENTRIES, OBSERVES **ADAM PLATT**, ARE RARELY AS BUTTONED-DOWN AS THEY SEEM.

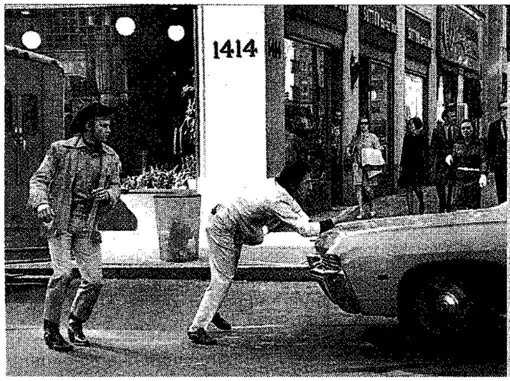
When I first came to New York, I made do without a doorman. I brayed into the intercom at fleets of uncomprehending deliverymen, muttered to myself as I wrestled with keys in the doorway, struggled up and down the stairs to my walk-up apartment bearing loads of grocery bags. When I finally did move into a doorman building, only a few of these circumstances actually changed. The building's elevator was an old, hand-driven Otis, so the gentlemen who greeted me each morning couldn't always help with my bags. They didn't always fend off the uncomprehending deliverymen, either, although I noticed they did lend an appreciative ear while I took to muttering at the door with my keys, and it wasn't long before they began muttering back.

Experts that I've consulted contend that New York City doormen, as a group, aren't a voluble bunch. Especially at the grand "A" buildings uptown, the conventional wisdom goes, they are totems of discretion, as prudent and solemn, in their shiny-buttoned coats, as judges. I beg to disagree. Beneath their suave veneer, doormen are as bellicose and fractious as the great city they represent. Gossip columnists will tell you that doormen are a primary source for celebrity chatter, and I know of at least one former business mogul who moved downtown to a spacious non-doorman loft just so he could conduct his private affairs in relative tranquillity.

Classic New York City doormen tend to live long lives, like turtles, and accumulate all sorts of strange bits of knowledge, which they pass on at the drop of a hat. One of my friends claims that the doormen at the building of his strict (and former) Freudian analyst were more kindly and helpful to him than the analyst himself. "They used to invite me out to Long Island," he says a little wistfully, "to drink beer and fish for porgies." Among the solicitous gentlemen in my first building, there was a voluble Kosovar named Barty, who used to zoom around in the Otis elevator and give me pointers on my dating life. "Mr. Platt, I just took some fine ladies up to 12F," he would say. "You should go talk to them. Even a dog doesn't like to live alone."

Barty was right, of course. Since my marriage ("It's okay, Mr. Platt," Barty confided. "I can tell she likes you"), I've moved to another building up the street, with its own hand-operated elevator and a whole new cast of characters. There's the late-night man, who sometimes rides the elevator in his socks, and "the professor," who keeps his own cappuccino machine in the basement and likes to give cockeyed seminars on the Bible and Proust. Then there's Tommy, from the Bronx, who one fateful evening heard my wife tell me not to forget to buy a bunch of cilantro at the grocery store. Tommy found mirth in our little yuppie exchange; don't ask me why. "Don't forget the cilantro," he said for the next six months or so, chuckling to himself as he bowed me out the door.

TOP DOORS: Left to right from top, Drew Turner, 320 West End Avenue; Walter Valentin, 470 West End Avenue; Tom Krebs, 800 Park Avenue; Emanuel Henry, 210 East 22nd Street; Elison Nelson Nieves, 330 Third Avenue; Alfred Rosello, 201 East 19th Street; Miguel Almodovar, 280 Park Avenue South; Michael N. Ribachonek, 20 Sutton Place South; Carlos Perez, 141 East 89th Street.

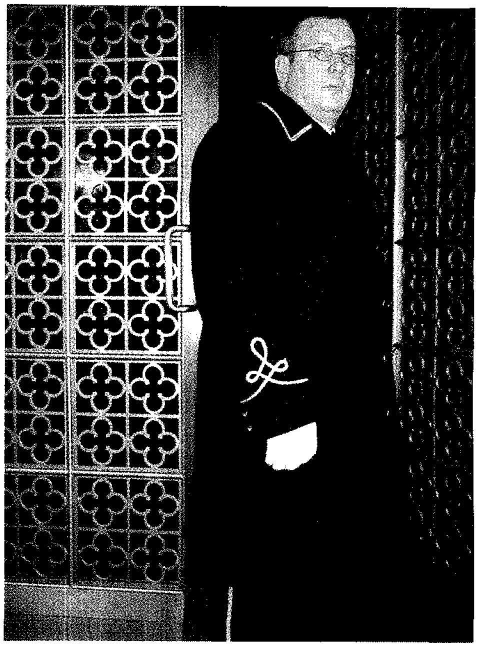


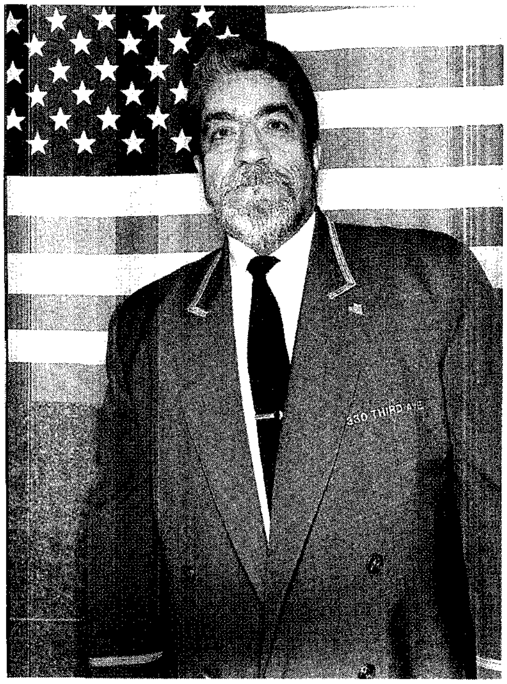
MIDNIGHT COWBOY

"I'm walking here! I'm walking here!"

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVID YELLEN

WEST END AVE
320

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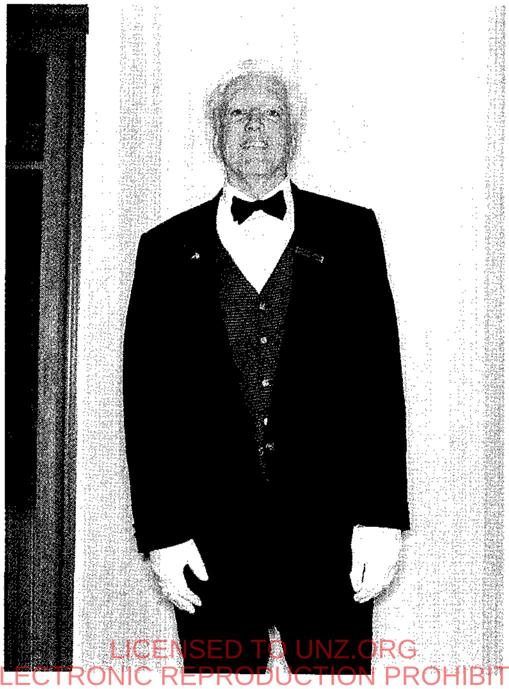

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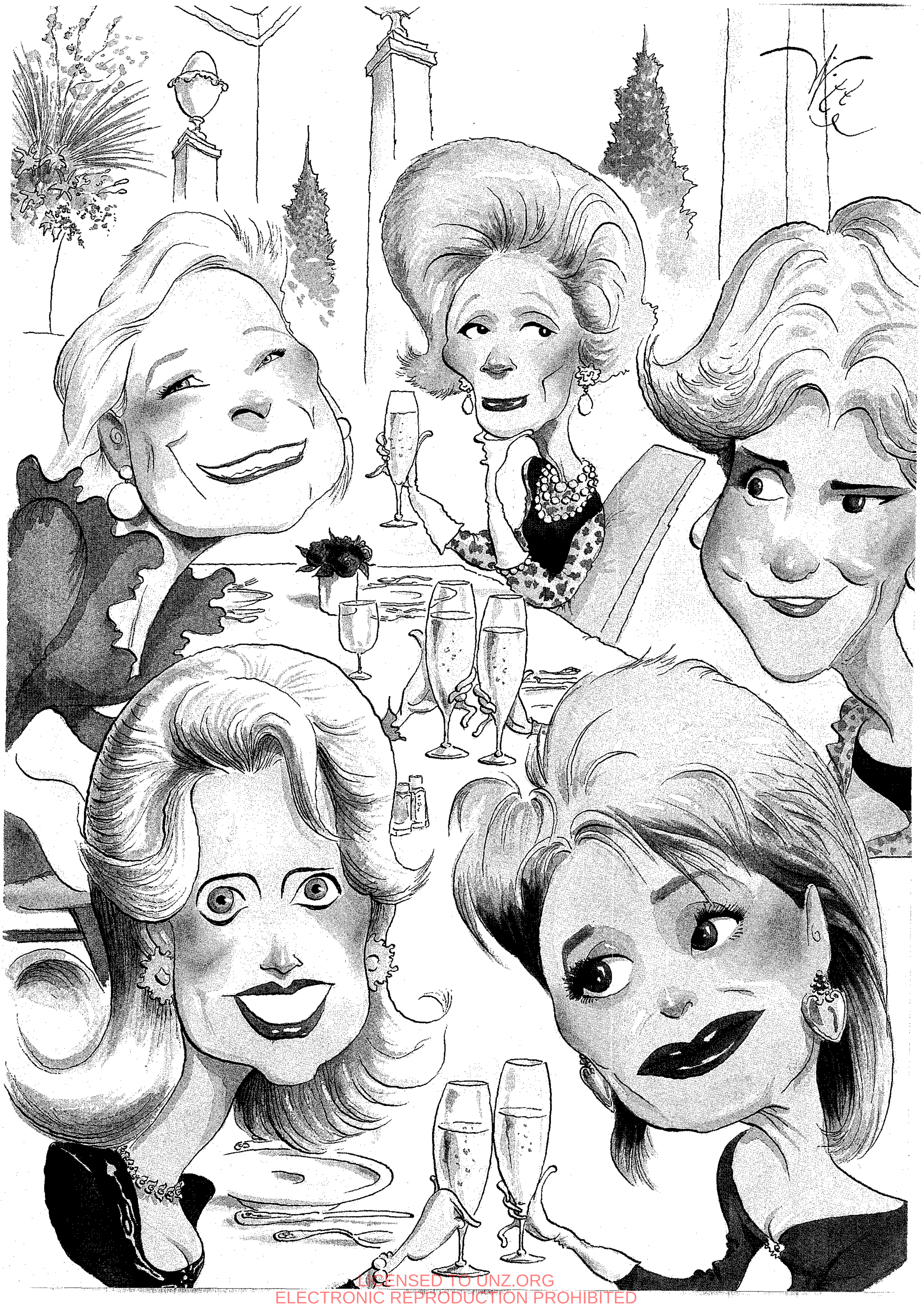


THE GRANDE DAME

THEY MAKE IT LOOK EASY, BUT THE SOCIAL LIFE, EXPLAINS **BOB MORRIS**, IS EQUAL PARTS DAZZLE AND DENIAL.

One night about ten years ago, when I didn't know a Pat Buckley from a Judy Peabody but had to learn fast since I had a gig reporting on society parties for the New York *Times*, I found myself seated next to Nan Kempner. We were at a dinner at the Italian consulate after the opening of Gianfranco Ferre's store, and the couture-loving socialite was wearing a pleated and preposterously puffy white blouse by the designer.

"When I sit next to you with this blouse on," Kempner told me in her flirtatiously girly smoker's rasp, "you know about it."

I giggled and started writing. She gave my hand a little smack.

"Put that notepad away," she muttered.

"But you're funny," I said. "I want to get the words down correctly."

"Well," she said, "you just have to develop a memory, my dear."

Was she being a little stuffy? What did it matter that I took a note or two at the table as long as my nails were clean and my suit well-pressed? A whole hell of a lot, actually. Because for Nan Kempner and the other socialites in New York now in their grande dame phase, being out to dinner is not unlike being on a stage. On their stage, brightly lit for comedy, impeccable manners and costumes, along with fluidity and wit, are always required.

In her book *Great Dames: What I Learned From Older Women*, Marie Brenner refers to "the theater of self" to describe these tenacious, ambitious fun-loving pre-feminists with flair who maintain a glossy public life, propelling themselves along with buoyancy while suffering in silence. "I believe in denial," Kitty Carlisle Hart tells Brenner. "Denial is a marvelous thing!"

Every city has its grandes dames. But we've always had more of them. Elsa Maxwell. Clare Boothe Luce. Babe Paley. Marietta Tree, who talked Mayor John Lindsay into lighting all the bridges around the city. Well-mannered but unshockable, convivial but not trivial, they know how to be interesting at lunch (and never talk about yoga classes or nutritional habits) because they're interested in things other than themselves.

Judy Peabody, who has served on the boards of Dance Theatre of Harlem and Gay Men's Health Crisis, likes to talk about the night the door fell off the livery car she flagged down after she had been doing some counseling for a Puerto Rican gang. Robin Chandler Duke recalls a childhood cook who almost died from a botched abortion as the inspiration for her championship of reproductive rights. Hart recalls visiting Albany as chairman of the New York State Council on the Arts in the eighties, to shame legislators about censorship. "Now, listen," she told them. "There's an opera done all over the world, and it's full of rape and murder, and it's called *Rigoletto*!"

In a city where private funding has to pay for almost everything, they take their charity work seriously. Pat Buckley, on the board of the Society of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, sends handwritten notes with benefit invitations to friends. Then, "after giving them time to simmer down," she says, she follows up with a phone call. "I make an ass out of myself, but it's for the right reasons."

WYNTON MARSALIS

"On Seventh Avenue in Greenwich Village, you'll see a long red awning. Down a narrow set of creaky stairs is a tiny stage and a buzzing crowd of jazz seekers. For 50 years, the Village Vanguard has been the place to hear it all."

They may not be a dying breed the way some say they are. But even if the new generation of glamorous New York women with social chops are happily shedding feminism and putting on fur and pearls again, they're far too cool to carry on in such bold, broad strokes. And for such a bold, broad city, that's too bad. "Everything is underdone these days," says Kempner, who believes the reason she tries so hard to dazzle and amuse is that she was an unattractive child.

As vivid as saints or pop divas, or Yankees, they could be their own trading cards. Brooke Astor in a hat. C. Z. Guest in her garden. Anne Slater in blue sunglasses. Nancy Kissinger with that little husband of hers. Louise Grunwald. Jayne Wrightsman. Even Barbara Walters, who the *Times* short-listed not long ago as the next Brooke Astor.

How many can you name? Who's married to whom? Who's worth more? Who shills for which charity? Look for them in the society pages! Collect them all! Develop your memories, my dears!

THE DAME GAME: Clockwise from top left, Nan Kempner, Brooke Astor, Pat Buckley, Barbara Walters, and Judy Peabody.

Statues of Liberty at South Street Seaport . . . deafening car stereos . . . cemeteries in Queens . . . Caffe Reggio's cappuccino . . . media moguls breakfasting at the Carlyle . . . spying on neighbors . . . Texans who have stronger accents after living in New York for five years than they did when they arrived . . . very skinny people . . . trying to figure out which is a taxi driver's first name and which is the last . . . obscenely fat house cats . . . the museum pay-what-you-can day . . . Spider-Man . . . being woken up by jackhammers, garbage trucks, and car alarms . . . traders walking through the financial district in their blazers . . . calling the Upper East Side "the East Side" . . . Turkish baths . . . live shellfish in buckets on Canal Street . . . old ladies leaning out their windows all day, guarding the block . . . stoopball . . . the fountain at Lincoln Center . . . Tiffany's . . . the pretzel . . . people swearing every year that it's their last year in the city . . . pigeons . . . staying friends with people only because they have the perfect roof for fireworks or the perfect window for parades . . .

MY DINNER WITH ANDRE

"New York is a prison, and we are all our own jailers."

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL WITTE

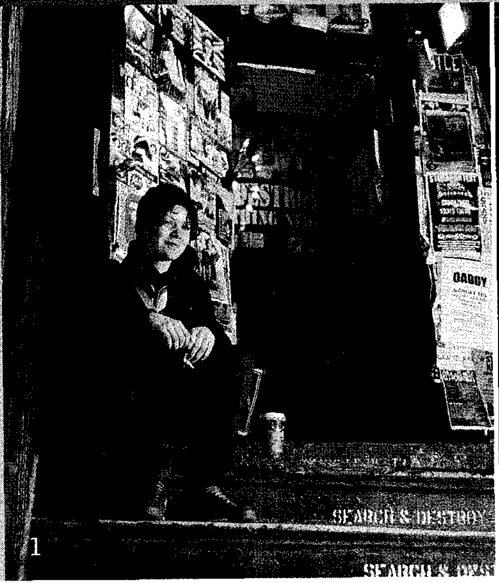
THE PROMENADE

There are streets in New York that are for business, or shopping, or eating, or simply for getting from one place to another. Then there are streets that are for seeing and being seen, for showing that you've arrived, and where you're going.

ST. MARKS PLACE

» Capital of youthful disaffection, and the place where many young New Yorkers begin to grow up.

1. Gillian Williams of Brooklyn Heights.
2. Ilahan Ersahin and his daughter Pasmin, of the East Village.
3 Kayt Romaker, Zack Miller, Secret Withen, and Chad Sadler, from Ohio.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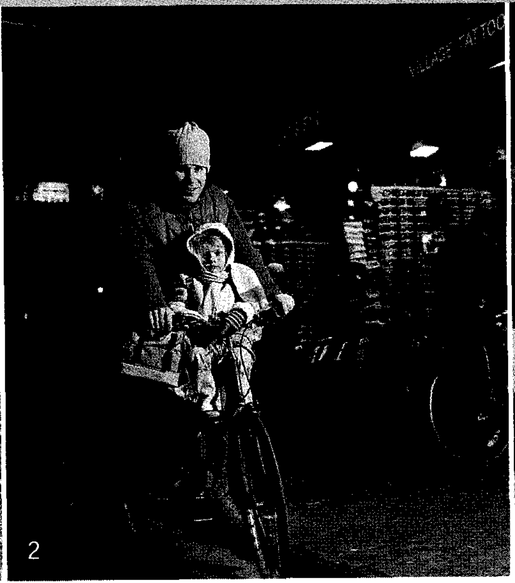
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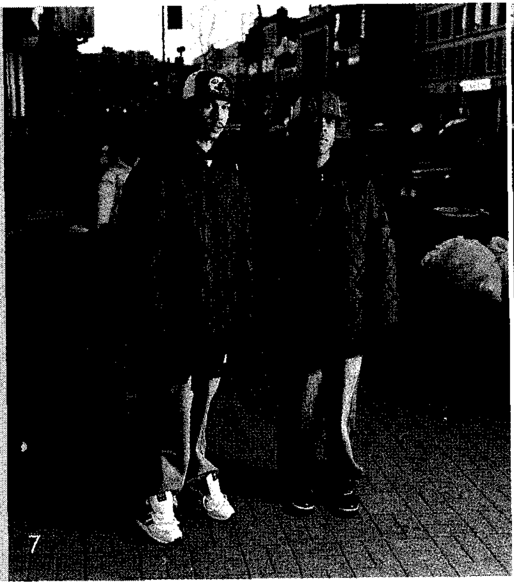
125TH STREET

» Home of the Apollo, main drag of Harlem and of black America. As such, style starts here—and returns in the chain stores that have arrived in the last ten years.

7. Mike J. Gottie and Keith Dore of Harlem.
8. Bria Tahja Pretty of Irvington, New Jersey.
9. Harry Dover and Ella Cunningham of the Bronx.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PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALEX TEHRANI.

MADISON AVENUE

« On Madison Avenue above 60th Street, the stores and boutiques draw an audience from all over the world—and the rich let their freak flag fly.

4 Ric Barbatelli of the Upper East Side.
5 Peter and Grace Rabar of Rye Brook, New York.
6 Elizabeth Pollock of the Upper East Side.

THE POWER LUNCH

AT MICHAEL'S, WRITES **MICHAEL WOLFF**, THE MEDIA ELITE WATCH EACH OTHER WATCHING EACH OTHER.

I have a lot of boring lunches, but I never have a boring lunch at Michael's.

That's because you're part of every other conversation in the place—everybody who you know or want to know is sharing secrets and confidences just a few feet away. (Restaurants where it's just you and your lunch date, forced to entertain each other, seem hard to justify.)

The other day, a gossip columnist I know was telling me, all cattylike, that he had seen me with a gossip-worthy luncheon companion who'd leaned over and, in a stagey way, confided something to me. And wasn't this ridiculous, the gossip columnist said, because everyone knows it's impossible to hear anything going on at any other table at Michael's—so that the only reason you would try to hide what you were saying is so that everyone would know you were trying to hide what you were saying.

I swear: At that moment, my companion had been telling me something delightful and mean and astute about the gossip columnist who was watching the confidence being shared.

DAN RATHER

"My favorite crosstown bus, which runs across 79th Street, through the park, past the Museum of Natural History, and then west, toward the Hudson and the setting sun."

Some people say this is so high school. But to me, it's the opposite. There's nothing chaotic or anarchic or gratuitous at Michael's. Everything is stylized, choreographed, orderly, courtly, elegant.

Michael's is as close as I've ever come to my dream of living in the Manhattan of the movies. The Manhattan of, say, *The Thin Man* (rather than the Manhattan of *The Sweet Smell of Success*).

You step into the door on 55th Street, in a building once owned by the Rockefellers, and get a greeting from Michael himself (when he's in from the coast—Michael's has a sister restaurant in Santa Monica), in brilliantine hair (recently he's been sporting a new floppy cut), or from one of the oddly nurturing ("You look great today") front-desk people. Then, from the top of the few steps leading down into the spacious dining room with good art and many flowers, you see everybody else in the media business who wants to be seen.

I have a table. It's table No. 5, which is a very good table very near the front of the room. Its sight lines go directly to the entryway, and its back is secured by the east wall (in view of table No. 1 in the bay with Caroline Kennedy playing with her hair or Mick Jagger drumming his fingers or Bill Clinton monologuizing his luncheon companions). Among the things I have never expected or wanted to achieve is a table of my own. And, I understand, my achievement here can be explained by little more than the fact that I might write articles like this (like Winchell at the Stork Club). Still, this takes nothing away from the satisfaction of having gained a contested piece of turf. (There is a menacing back room at Michael's where faceless people are led every day, never to emerge.)

Before Michael's was Michael's, it was the Italian Pavilion, which in a former heyday of media life had a serious following among advertising and network types. My father was in the agency business and once took me to lunch there and pointed out Bill Paley, the chairman of CBS and the most powerful and elegant man then alive.

I think this is part of the Michael's attraction: It recalls this other, more salubrious, three-martini era (occasionally, someone will even have a martini at Michael's), when media was the easiest game in town, when the world was made up of a passive audience and eager advertisers, when the money flowed like gin—as opposed to now, with media being a tortured, hardscrabble affair. A bleak, unpromising, Darwinian struggle.

I sometimes think this is part of a running joke. When you're making a lunch date and say to someone, "Michael's?"—they're in on it. The joke is that all these media bigs show up for lunch and pretend everything is just fine and still supporting these incredibly expensive meals, while waiting for the person at the next table to break down in tears (at any given moment, everyone knows who will likely be crying next).

In other establishments like this—the Four Seasons, for instance—there's a certain sort of pretense. People in a gated community pretend that they live the lives of people outside the gated community, or pretend the gated area is normal life.

But Michael's isn't like that. Everybody is open about being on the inside. It's like a prison yard.

As soon as you're seated, you start assessing who you see (if your lunch date hasn't yet arrived, you call someone on your cell to report who's there). Every conversation I've had at Michael's is very analytic, very smart, very precise about who is falling from what height and how fast—about what forces are about to take what person apart.

It's all deconstruction.

Which is why lunch is so satisfying.

PHOTOGRAPH (RIGHT) BY HENRY MCGEE/GLOBE PHOTOS.

Staten Island threatening to secede and no one (except Republican candidates) caring . . . motorcades snarling traffic . . . deli guys who memorize your order after a while so you never have to ask for your breakfast . . . cruise bars . . . the lions in front of the New York Public Library . . . diplomat parking spaces . . . unwritten but sacred social rules involving personal space (like, take off your backpack on the subway) . . . graffiti . . . McSorley's ale . . . New Yorkers gathering around lost tourists to argue about how they should get where they're going . . . umbrella carnage on every corner after a storm . . . bike messengers . . . cheesecake . . . bohemianism . . . the $1,000 "key

THE GOSSIP COLUMNIST

JAY MCINERNEY ON THE PLEASURES (AND PERILS) OF "PAGE SIX."

A well-traveled Manhattanite in Dawn Powell's *The Happy Island* astounds and amuses his dinner guests by explaining that Middle Americans actually start with the front page of their newspaper; New Yorkers, of course, turn immediately to the market quotes or the gossip columns. During the nineties, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish between these different sections—the gossip columns seemed to invade and colonize the front page. And then, after 9/11, the invasion was, for a time, reversed. The New York *Post*'s "Page Six" ran items such as VONNEGUT PRAISES OUR HEROES. (If gossip is the news with its pants down, this was like watching the Red Hot Chili Peppers trying to wear Huntsman suits.)

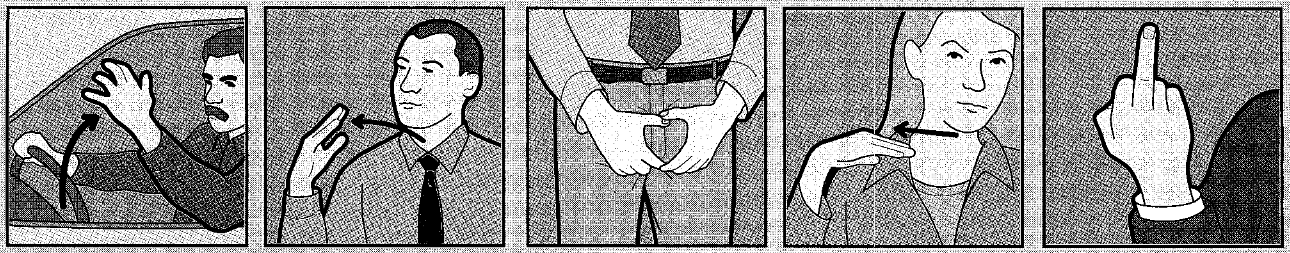
But it's safe to say that the reading habits of Dawn Powell's café society are pretty much intact. New York is divided between those who turn to "Page Six" to read about their neighbors and those who do so to read about themselves. It's a game that everyone's in on. One morning, I woke up and found I was a character in the gossip columns. I'd made a few appearances before, but I really landed right in the middle of things when I started dating the most tabloid-gossip-column-worthy personage in Manhattan at the time. Let's just say that gossip columns are a bad venue in which to conduct a relationship.

As a boldfaced name, I would sometimes read that I'd been "sighted" at a nightspot I'd never been to, celebrating the birthday/book/movie of someone I'd never heard of, "canoodling" with a woman I'd never met. These gossip items were neither more nor less accurate than the stuff that was written about me, as a novelist, in the culture pages of glossy magazines and newspapers.

It doesn't take long to figure out that "Page Six" leans right and Liz Smith leans left. Real connoisseurs know the client lists of the various publicists—they know that the late Neal Travis used to spend a lot of time on the phone with Bobby Zarem, and that Richard Johnson of "Page Six" is married to publicist Nadine Johnson, who was once employed by . . . well, you get the idea. Publicists have a complicated co-dependent relationship with the columnists, trying to build heat without getting burned. (See *Sweet Smell of Success* for details.) Then there are the gossip groupies—people who collect items in order to see their names in print, linked to the stars. But the real gritty stuff comes from civilians, New Yorkers who are out to settle scores with their bosses or their ex-lovers or business partners.

I was once sitting at a table at '21' with the *Post*'s Richard Johnson when a striking blonde came up and slipped a scrap of paper into his hands. Richard is better-looking than a lot of the actors who appear in his column, and I naturally assumed he'd just gotten a proposition and a phone number. But in fact, the scribbled note was a scurrilous item about boardroom shenanigans at a media conglomerate—written in "Page Six" style, ready to go. "Sometimes it's al-

SIGN LANGUAGE 10 WAYS NEW YORKERS SAY "HAVE A NICE DAY"



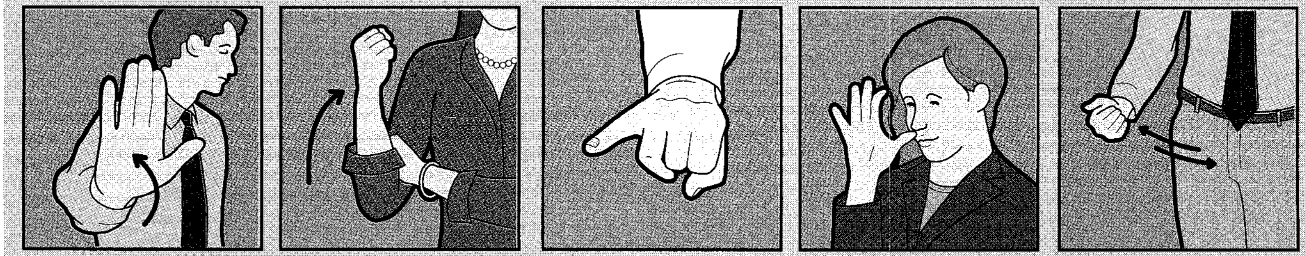
CABBIE WAVE
vehicular derogatory:
"Cut me off, I cut you off."

CUT THROAT
barroom belittling:
"Better believe it."

CROTCH GRAB
genitalized naysay:
"Some of this."

THROAT SLIT
funereal dismissal:
"Where you breathe."

THE FINGER
classic scoff:
"Yeah, you."



TALK TO THE HAND
comprehensive sandbag:
"Back in your hole."

UP YOURS
buzz-off maximus:
"Your face, my ass."

UNGIFTED
feminine rejoinder:
"Itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny."

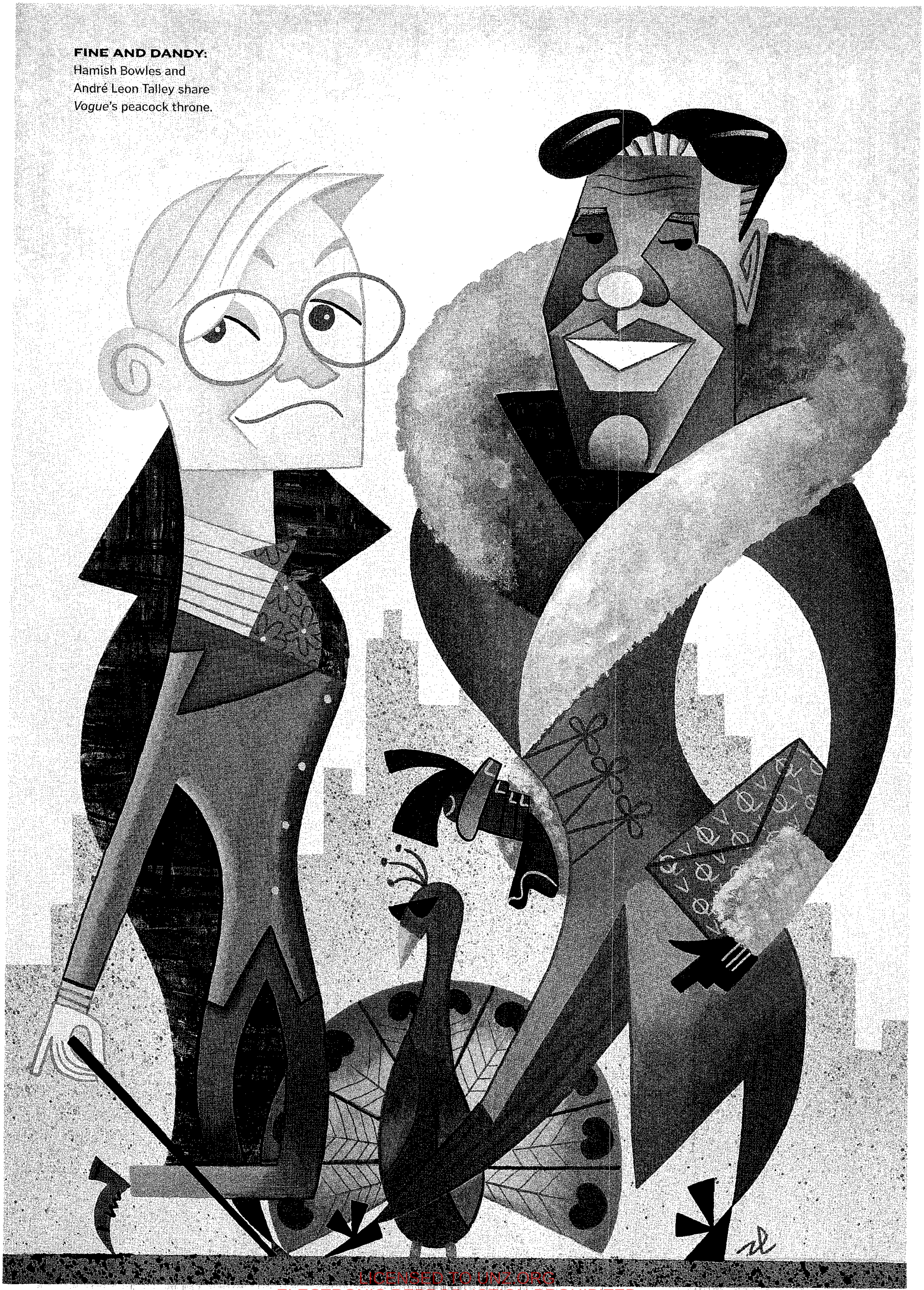
FINGER WAG
juvenile nyah-nyah:
"Your mama."

THE WANKER
exasperated chide:
"You must be kidding."

ILLUSTRATION BY WILLIAM VAN RODEN

OVERHEARD ON THE STREET: Richard Johnson at Langan's.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY LEN IRISH



FINE AND DANDY: Hamish Bowles and André Leon Talley share *Vogue*'s peacock throne.

most too easy," Johnson said, folding the paper and slipping it into the pocket of his blue blazer.

"Page Six" has evolved into a kind of postmodern gossip column that's helped create new New York–centric subcategories of celebrity. The column gives equal time and ink to the star-makers and handmaidens of celebrity—the journalists, agents, publicists, party promoters, and party animals. "Page Six" recognized long ago our snobbish need for an exclusive class of notables unknown to citizens of Peoria. And its tone reflects the fierce Darwinian spirit of a city in which Schadenfreude is the concomitant of the worship of worldly success.

Dawn Powell would have loved it.

THE DANDY

IN A SEE-AND-BE-SEEN-STRUTTING TOWN, HAMISH BOWLES AND ANDRÉ LEON TALLEY RULE THE ROOST, WRITES **PAUL RUDNICK**.

New York is suffering from a hideous dandy shortage. We're trapped in some eternal casual Friday; all of our men seem to have been issued lumpy cotton crewnecks, pleated khakis, igloolike sneakers, and those monotonous hip-length black leather car coats. Accessorize with baseball caps and soccer-dad fanny packs and multiply by the millions. What the city so desperately requires is that rarest of creatures, that epic gentleman of fashion—the dandy. Tom Wolfe is hall of fame, in his fiendishly hand-tailored pastel suits and high, starched collars, and Sean "P. Diddy" Combs is on the rise, flashing major-ice cuff links against his creamy-white cashmere coat. But for the hugely entertaining, bespoke elegance of the true dandy, we must salute the men of *Vogue*, Hamish Bowles and André Leon Talley.

DANIEL BOULUD

"Biancardi's on Arthur Avenue in the Bronx. It transcends fads and maintains its Italian roots. It's an essential part of the melting pot."

Bowles is *Vogue*'s European editor-at-large, and he's always writing scrupulously researched, gorgeously illustrated pieces on anything from the Parisian digs of designer Christian Lacroix, which include "winter and summer living rooms," to the Dominican beachfront estate of Julio Iglesias, the construction of which the crooner supervised from a "mattress on a crane." In London, Bowles was the style director of *Harper's & Queen* for seven years, until he arrived at *Vogue* in 1992. He also curated the Metropolitan Museum Costume Institute's recent tribute to Jackie Kennedy, and his private stash includes hundreds of vintage pieces, boasting treasures from Schiaparelli to Saint Laurent. Like all great dandies, Bowles knows his stuff; he appreciates fashion with a scholar's dedication and a poet's passion. But all of this pales beside Bowles's supreme contribution to city life: the glorious pageant of his personal wardrobe.

I've never met the man, but I've seen him out on the town; his owlish horn-rims and floppy forelock lend him a Harry Potter wizardry. I once glimpsed him at an antiques show at the 55th Street Pier as he strode by in a slouchy tweed suit, a billowing trench coat, and a crisp shirt and tie that managed to eloquently combine lavender and lime green. The sight was extraordinarily cheering; it was a thrill to watch someone who cared enough to wear not what was merely performance-fleece comfortable but something deliriously, exuberantly dapper.

At six-seven, André Leon Talley is a giant of fashion. He was the protegé of Warhol and of Vreeland before landing at *Vogue*, where he's editor-at-large and also contributes the yummily addictive "stylefax" column; Anna Wintour even tossed him her wedding bouquet. Like Bowles, Talley relishes and embodies the history of style, with a master's degree from Brown in French literature. He's also a television favorite, issuing grand pronouncements in the high-Vreeland manner. Once seen, Talley is beyond unforgettable. During Fashion Week, he provided commentary on the Metro Channel straddling a chair backward and swathed in a floor-length Napoleonic greatcoat with an Elvis-scale collar. He's been photographed in any number of Milanese front rows, in a bedspread's worth of Fendi fur, or a cherry-red down-filled cloud, or an immaculately cut navy-blue pinstripe suit. Talley takes full advantage of his size; he's like the Statue of Liberty in couture. If a dandy is always an event, André Leon Talley is Radio City at Christmastime.

Vogue is the natural showcase for women of style, but Bowles and Talley lend the magazine a dandy's heroic flair. Most men's clothing pleads, "I'm sorry, but this is the best I can do." An appearance by Bowles or Talley declares, "This peacock rules!"

deposit" often required to secure an apartment . . . the Halloween Parade . . . the pot parade . . . egg creams . . . people selling batteries on the train . . . getting roasted nuts, never as good as they smell . . . brunch . . . mean museum guards . . . Manic Panic hair dye . . . the Strand Book Store . . . knowing someone who can get you a discount on anything in the world . . . the Peking Duck House . . . the Cyclone . . . steam rising from manholes . . . urban gardens . . . "the bridge-and-tunnel crowd" . . . Century 21 . . . hosts' not knowing anyone at their own parties . . . the invention of hip-hop . . . pride in showing off the city to friends in from out of town, profound disappointment when they just want to go to Saks . . . colleagues' swearing you to secrecy about things that no one could possibly care about . . . lines around the block for stainless-steel breakfast carts . . . J. D. Salinger . . . Woolworth's (R.I.P.) . . . Lou Reed . . . the little pinpoints of light from the Empire State Building's observation deck when tourists forget to turn off the flashes on their

DO THE RIGHT THING

Buggin' Out: You the man.
Mookie: No, you the man.
Buggin' Out: You the man.
Mookie: No, you the man.

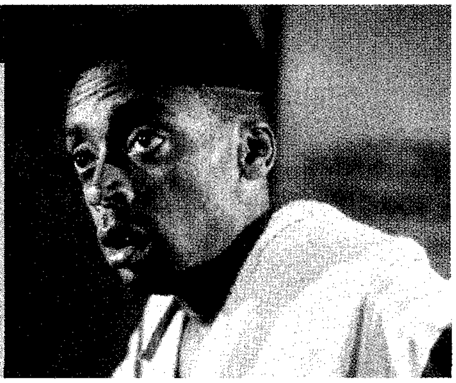


ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT DE MICHIELL

cameras . . . the Carousel in Central Park . . . New Yorkers of every age, race, and class waiting patiently in four-block-long lines on 9/11 just to make an appointment to donate blood . . . those Greek blue-and-white paper coffee cups . . . affectionately surly wait staff . . . creative use of expletives . . . *faux* dive bars standing beside real dive bars . . . running around the reservoir . . . pointy shoes . . . in the subway, Guatemalan pipe players drowning out a jazz sax drowning out a Michael Jackson impersonator drowning out Jews for Jesus missionaries . . . General Tso's chicken . . . coffee "light and sweet" . . . *Union Square* Greenmarket . . . REVS, COST, and AIR with the R backward scratched into subway windows . . . dog runs . . . famous people everywhere except where the tourists are looking for them . . . "*I'm* not a yuppie" . . . ladies-who-lunch . . . velvet ropes . . . the Staten Island Ferry as free Circle Line alternative . . . hearing ten languages spoken in the course of a single block . . . how the concept of "full"

THE STREET PERFORMERS

You don't have to go to a show or concert to be entertained—just ride the subway home from work. **1** Fernando Riano at the Times Square station; **2** "Kimber" at the 34th Street and Sixth Avenue subway station; **3** "Emann," a.k.a. Marvin Banner, at the 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue subway station; **4** Julio Cesar Diaz with his doll Lupita at the Times Square subway station; **5** Naked Cowboy Robert Burck in Times Square; **6** Jimmy Sutherland tap-dances at the Times Square subway station; **7** Adam from the "Float Committee" at the Herald Square station; **8** "Pots-n-Pans" at the 7-train platform in Grand Central; **9** Katie Pawluk plays at the N/R platform at Times Square.

THE SHRINK

WITH SO MUCH TO BE ANXIOUS ABOUT, WRITES **JENNIFER SENIOR**, IT'S NO WONDER THE CITY NEVER SLEEPS.

I have this hunch—or fantasy, really, since we're speaking in the idiom—that Bill Clinton started seeing an analyst the moment he moved to New York. It isn't based on a scrap of inside information, mind you, but it's hard to imagine the alternative, which is that he *didn't*. Does anyone move to New York without taking a stab at therapy? And if our compulsive, overachieving, self-disclosing, fatherless, unemployed, empty-nester ex-president isn't the ideal candidate for analysis, then who is?

Odd: Troubled people go their whole lives without examining what ails them until they come to New York. The consequences of a traumatic death, an abusive parent, a rootless childhood, a closeted adolescence—all remain mysterious until they enter our complex ecosystem of mental-health professionals, whose couches form a corduroy trail from the West Village to Washington Heights. (Except for Massachusetts, New York State has the most psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers per capita in the country. And we spend

DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN

Girl: "We thought you were dead."
Susan: "No, just in New Jersey."

PHOTOGRAPH (LEFT) BY PHOTOFEST.

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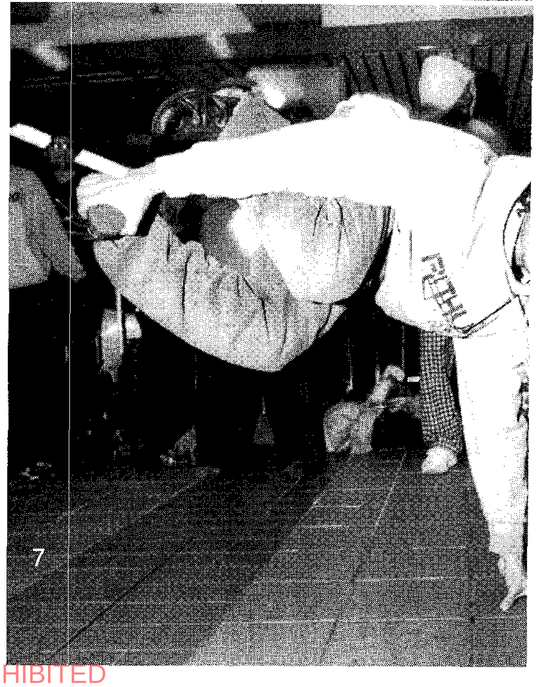

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PHOTOGRAPHED BY JERRY ARCIERI.

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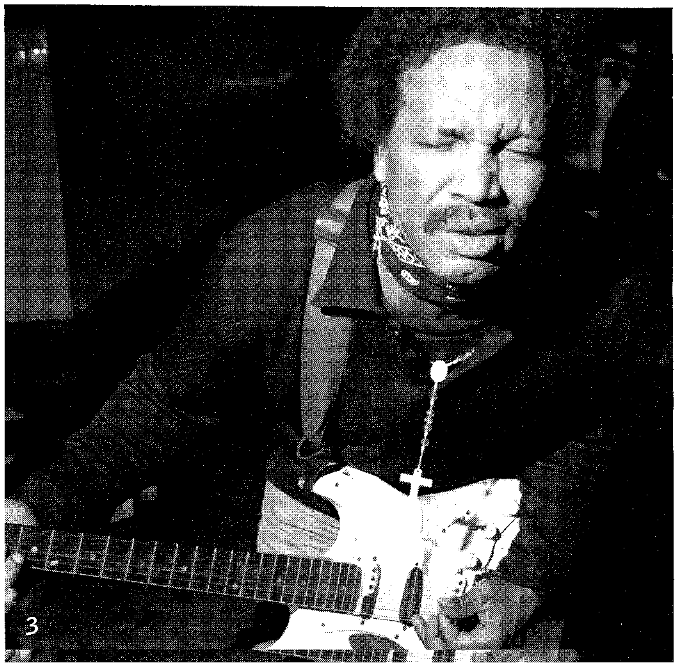

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SIMONIZED: Simon Doonan in the Cher-themed Barneys Christmas windows.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BEN BAKER.

most on mental health, per capita, bar none.)

We all know that this city attracts striving, anguished misfits, but we're less inclined to consider how it creates them, too; once parked on the couch, most analysands are surprised to discover that the city itself has become, if not a virtual character in their lives, then a sneaky enabler of conflict. "Freud founded psychoanalysis to think about the collision between man as a biological animal and civilization," says Phillip Freeman, a psychiatrist who trains future analysts at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute. "That collision is particularly abrupt in New York. In a place where stimulation is so high and anonymity is the baseline, where else would people more appreciate someone attending to *their* experiences and *their* search for meaning?"

Perhaps we should talk about this.

THE STORE WINDOW

SHOPPING IS THEATER. AND WINDOW DRESSER **SIMON DOONAN**, OF BARNEYS, COMMANDS THE STAGE.

When did you fall in love with windows?

I grew up in Reading, England, which was kind of the equivalent of Scranton, and in the fifties, local store windows were a very significant part of the cultural scene in small towns. Because they were free and because there was absolutely bugger-all else to do, they were a major event. I do remember standing on the sidewalk and just gasping, even if it was just some old snowman made out of tissue paper or a stuffed reindeer with one eyeball hanging out on thread. It wasn't about the tough audience you find now on Madison Avenue.

Are store windows an art form?

No. If they were, it would be a total, raving drag. It's design, it's craft, it's marketing, none of which art should be. People have said to me, "Oh, you're an artist" because they want to pay you a compliment, but what's an artist? It's just another job. Having said that, Gene Moore, the Tiffany's display legend who died a couple of years ago in his eighties, was sort of an artist. In the fifties and sixties, he collaborated with Warhol and Rauschenberg and his windows verged on art.

What was the most memorable complaint?

When we did Magic Johnson, he agreed we could caricature him, but he said we had to promote safe sex in some way. We found all these gold-wrapped condoms and put them on these little trees, and I thought they looked all nice and twinkly and adorable—and then the Catholic League launched this whole campaign. By the end of it, the word was that we had used condoms hanging on Christmas trees. People say we do controversial stuff for publicity, but that's the opposite of what you want going on at Christmas. You want things to be fuzzy and alluring. It's when the retail world is most competitive, so it's the last time you want to be pissing people off.

DEBORAH SCHWARZ

changes on trains during rush hour . . . punk teenagers sulking under the Astor Place cube . . . the Apollo . . . proud ignorance of U.S. geography . . . scorn for suburbia . . . bucks, not dollars . . . drumming on buckets . . . never seeing any stars . . . the Flatiron Building . . . finding great furniture on the street . . . the San Gennaro Festival . . . school trips to the dinosaur wing of the Museum of Natural History . . . joy at seeing a free cab even if you don't need one right then . . . hoodies . . . nerds proud of being nerds . . . Eloise of the Plaza . . . patent refusal to call Hell's Kitchen "Clinton" . . . selling, buying, jumping off the Brooklyn Bridge . . . the world's most arrogant, obnoxious video-store clerks . . .

THE SWANKY BAR

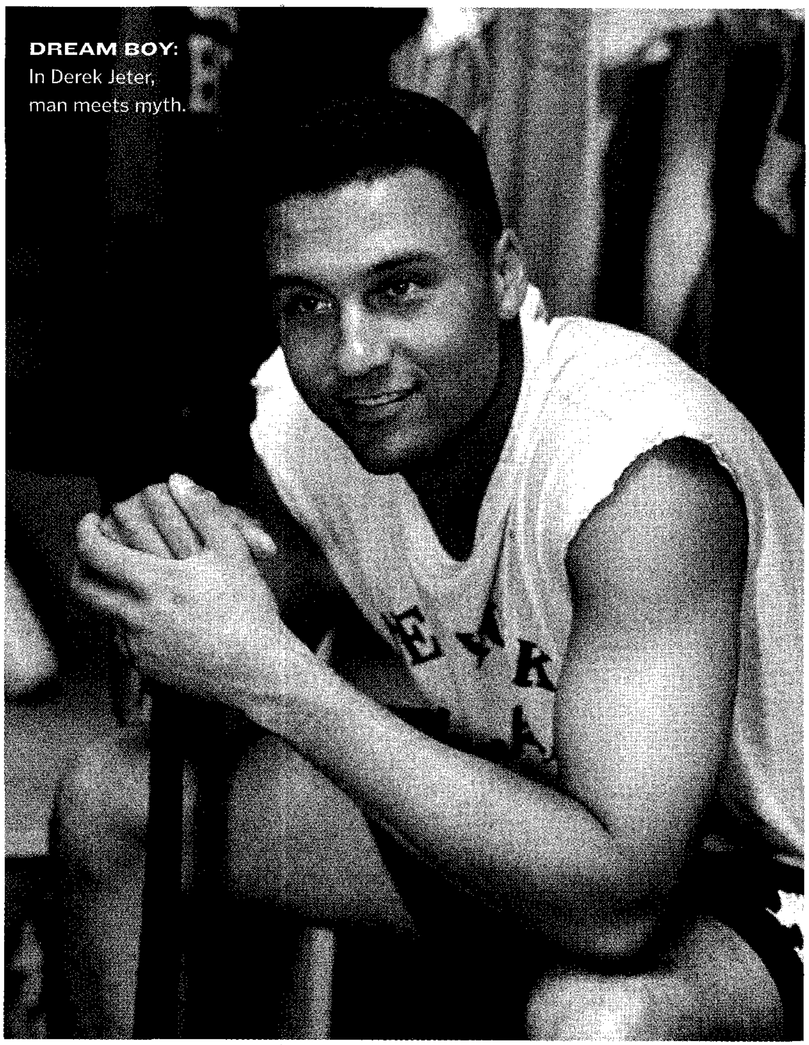
THERE WERE SOME RICH COUSINS who went there. But not everyone in the family believed them. Drinking champagne and mixing with the swells at the Stork Club (pictured right, circa 1944)—they had the money for it, but who would let those nobodies slip through the door? In any case, the cousins hailed from Brooklyn, where the idea of the fabulous obviously differed from mine.

As a boy in the Bronx, I saw the *Thin Man* movies and dreamed of a higher life across the river—the same glamorous life Fred Astaire led in black tie, hair slicked back, body pressed a bit forward over a polished bar and a chilled martini. I was 25 and had been living in Manhattan for years before I stepped into the Oak Room of the Plaza Hotel and felt I had finally landed in the New York of my imaginings. I had never even walked into the hotel before, sure that I was not well dressed enough to be allowed in. The Plaza was made for Jay Gatsby, maybe—although he was just another bounder like myself—and Daisy and Tom Buchanan and Jordan Baker—they were the real belongers, entitled to take a room one hot summer afternoon and order ice and mint for their drinks.

A distinguished English writer and his Savile Row suit first brought me to the Oak Room. I stayed on for a decade. The year Lord Snowdon made silk turtlenecks fashionable, I wore one to the Oak Room, knowing that tie and jacket was the dress code but certain that after Snowdon, the rule would have to be changed. But the maître d', whom I had long come to know, said politely that he could not let me in.

"You can't imagine who will come here if we relax the code," he said.

FREDERIC TUTEN



DREAM BOY: In Derek Jeter, man meets myth.

clever acronymic neighborhood names: Tribeca, Noho, Nolita, Dumbo, etc. . . . Letterman . . . everyone is moonlighting . . . world-class pickup basketball . . . jaded 6-year-olds . . . the Odeon . . . gallery-hopping in Chelsea . . . deep suspicions about what happens on Governor's Island . . . "Houston" pronounced differently from anywhere else on earth . . . pooper-scooper laws . . . disintegrating Lower East Side tenements . . . the opening night of a Broadway show . . . the waterfront . . . nannies sitting on park

THE NATURAL

CHRIS SMITH ON WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A HOMETOWN HERO.

A sunny afternoon, March 1999. Inside the tiny press box atop Joker Marchant Stadium, Florida home of the Detroit Tigers and one of the very last gloriously rickety spring-training ballparks. A routine ground ball bounces lazily past the mound and just to the left of the shortstop for the visiting New York Yankees. He glides two steps, is in perfect fielding position . . . and then flails at the ball as if he'd been thrown a dirty diaper. "Wow," says the Tigers' official scorer. "Are we allowed to give the golden boy an error?"

In sarcasm, there is truth. Jeter's moments of awkwardness are so rare as to be glaring. This is the first requirement for New York's reigning Natural. Desire and sweat are fine, but they can't be advertised, and the moving parts must never show. It's okay to get your uniform dirty, but you must somehow still radiate a glow through the mud. So smooth-swinging Mickey Mantle could be the Natural; awkward Yogi Berra never could.

There are other traits the Natural must possess. He should be pretty: See Mantle, Frank Gifford, Joe Namath. He needs to play on a championship team. Race surely helped elevate Mantle over Willie Mays in the popularity standings, but put Mantle in the Polo Grounds center field with those mediocre Giants teams, and he loses his luster.

The Natural needs to have grown up in front of our eyes. New York's fans need to feel that we've seen the Natural grow from raw, precocious talent to polished, dominant veteran. Jeter rose through the Yankees minors and arrived in the Bronx in 1996, at the shiny age of 21, accompanied by—crucially—a slowly building drumbeat, not heralding trumpets.

Which fits with another element: remoteness. This allows New York's celebrity machine to weave the Natural's myth. Everybody loved Walt Frazier when the Knicks were winning, but, with the furs and the hats and the white Rolls, Frazier was too exuberant to be Natural; plodding but unknowable Bill Bradley was the anointed one. The still-unchallenged template in this regard is Joe DiMaggio. Silent by nature, even surly, DiMaggio was savvy enough to understand how mystery fed his aura.

Some of the conditions do change with the times. DiMaggio rode a current of immigrant pride, and his 56-game hitting streak was a sweet diversion as World War II loomed. Namath swung in with the brash, long-haired, sexed-up late sixties. And Jeter, the child of a white mom and a black dad, is perfect for our polyglot new millennium.

The last, cruelest requirement is that the Natural make us all young. Because the Natural really is about us, not him. In a grimy, noisy city where every day is a battle, where fortunes and legends are made but compromises and disappointments pile up faster than ballpark peanut shells, we need an athlete who makes it all look easy. And that grace is Derek Jeter's greatest gift.

THE BODEGA

» Grocery store, social club, even day-care center. New York's bodegas make its unforgiving streets into neighborhoods.

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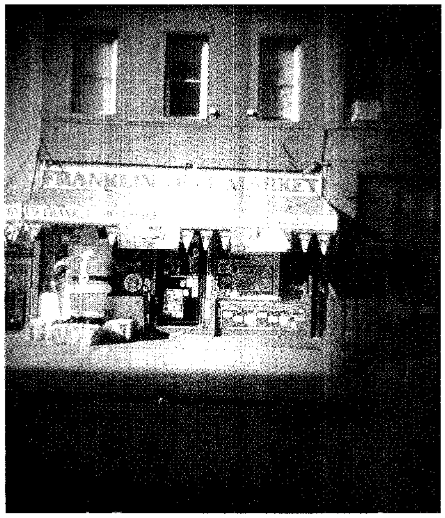
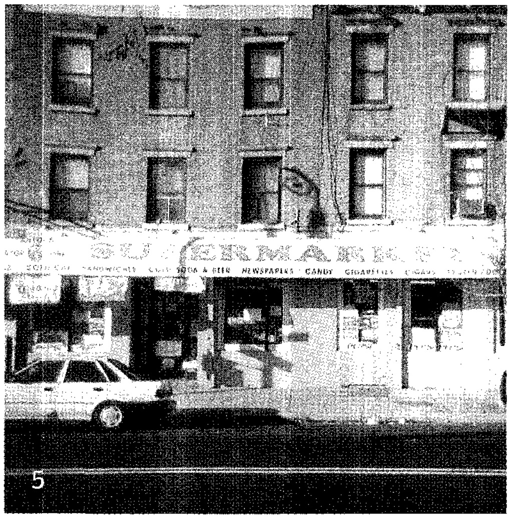

FRANKLIN MARKET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SANDWICHES
COLD SODA & BEER
NEWSPAPERS
CANDY
CIGARETTES
CIGARS

5

SUPER DELI & GROCERY

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COLD BEER
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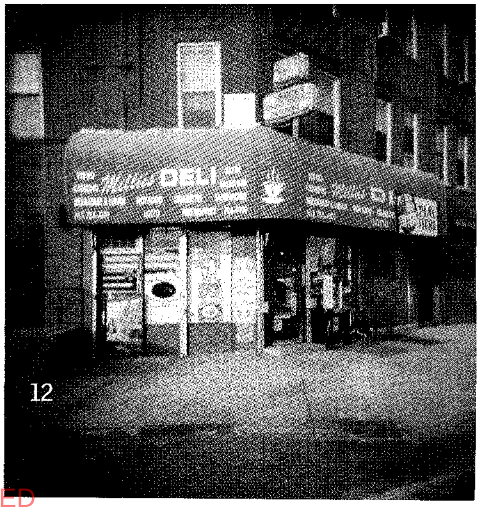

DELI

12

BELLINI FILM: Photographer Peter Beard and friends at Cipriani downtown.

benches together . . . telling time by clocks on tall buildings . . . Brighton Beach . . . blowing out-of-town guests' minds by taking them to Canal Street in the middle of the day or Times Square late at night . . . leaving your newspaper in coffee shops or on buses for strangers to read . . . sitting on a stoop drinking beer out of brown paper bags . . . drinking martinis at an elegant old hotel bar . . . haggling with street vendors . . . Manny's Music . . . New Jerseyites in Soho . . . the tree and skaters at Rockefeller Center . . . the mitzvah tanks . . . Euros wandering through Long Island City in search of MoMA QNS . . . that guy who dances with a life-size doll in the

THE EURO

WHAT, ASKS **AMY LAROCCA**, WOULD NEW YORK BE WITHOUT ITS AIR-KISSING, MODELIZING CONTINENTALS?

Here is a man, bellini in hand, waiting for his table at Downtown Cipriani. He is not tall. His three dates—young, with creamy complexions—are all taller than he is. He is tan. His chest is exposed—does one less button really make such a difference? It does. *Does this man even own socks?* Everything about his moves—his reflex double kissing, his warm greeting from the maître d'—says one thing: "I own this town." Odds are, his English is a bit rusty.

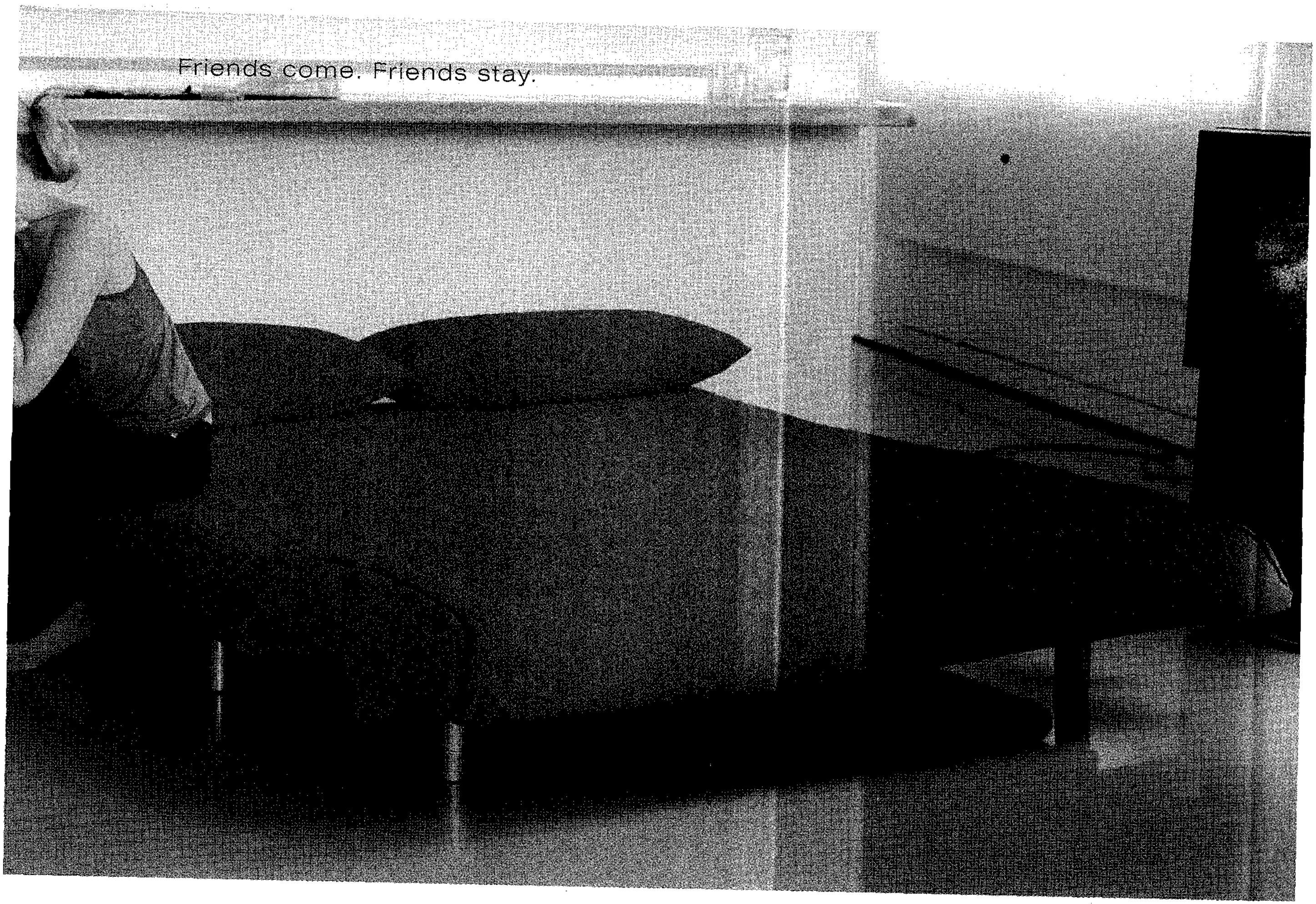
Euros in Manhattan are not everywhere. They are not, for example, thrashing their heads around at CBGB. They are not on line at ESPN Zone in Times Square. But where they are—Downtown Cipriani, for example—they *own*. Manhattanites defer to them; the lifestyle these dashing Euros represent—late dinners, *culture*—is widely considered closer to ours than anything to be found in mainland America.

Paolo Zampolli, head of ID Models, eats at Downtown twice a day. He moved his office to be closer. "It's like a *circolo*," he explains, which is Italian for club, a place where, even if you arrive solo, you needn't eat your branzino alone. He knows who will be at which table at dinnertime: 10 P.M.? Roffredo Gaetani (Ivana's ex), Peter Beard, Roberto Cavalli, Helmut Lang, and Giuseppe Cipriani himself, at a table in the front: handsome men in jackets, striking women in heavy-gauge cashmere. His friends, imported from Venice. "My English is bad," says Marco Revedin, a handsome Venetian with a thick brown lock of hair falling over his eye. "Maybe I need American girlfriend?" He laughs and is engulfed in a hug from Cecilia ("Ch-che-lia"), a striking model-cum-artist. "There, there, Marco!" she laughs, rolling the *r*. "You might find a lawyer, an artist, a beautiful Frenchwoman who has just arrived," Stefania Girombelli, who came from Venice to work for her old friends the Ciprianis, says of the dinner crowd. "You know," she shrugs, "the same people you'd find in Venice."

CHUCK CLOSE

"The galleries. The richness of visual materials, the smorgasbord of things to look at. It's an incredible gift."

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARK PETERSON



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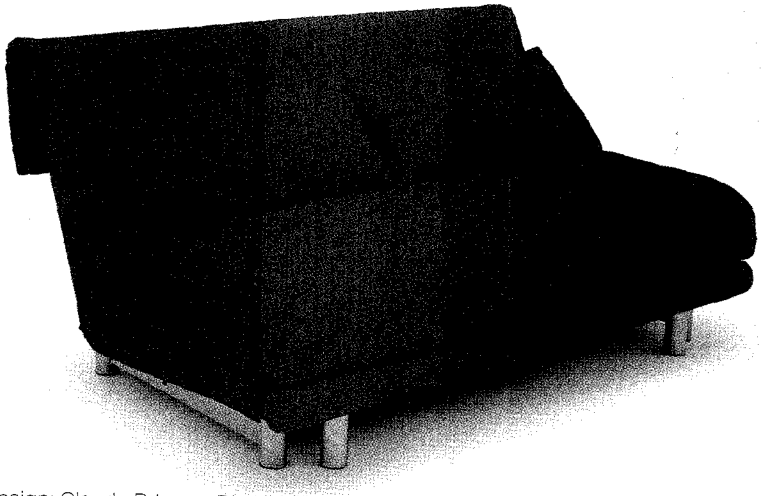

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THE NYC TOP 40

BY MARK JACOBSON

40. "I Love NYC"—Andrew W.K. It's not even rock and roll, but we like it, sort of.

39. "40 Shades of Blue"—Black 47. Immigrant drinking on the Bowery, circa CBGB. One hundred years earlier: "The Bowery" ("I struck a place that they called a dive / I was in luck to get out alive"), from the 1892 musical *A Trip to Chinatown.*

38. "New York Skyline"—Garland Jeffreys. One of the best N.Y. homesick songs.

37. "(Dolls) New York"—the Sex Pistols. Also, everything by the New York Dolls.

36. "Meet the Mets." "Knocking those home runs over the wall"—yeah, sure. Still better than the Yankees' "New York, New York," by Sinatra.

35. "Detachable Penis"—King Missile. Hard-core life on St. Marks Place. Also see "Holiday Cocktail Lounge" by the Bouncing Souls, "Piss Factory" by Patti Smith.

34. "Brooklyn Bridge"—Frank Sinatra. From *It Happened in Brooklyn,* with Jimmy Durante. Other bridge songs: "Brooklyn Bridge Blues" by folkie Eric Andersen, "The Bridge (Williamsburg)" by Sonny Rollins, "59th Street Bridge Song" by Simon and Garfunkel.

33. "Life During Wartime"—Talking Heads. "This ain't no disco . . . This ain't no Mudd Club." Same time, Blondie's "Rip Her to Shreds." Good N.Y. bitchiness.

32. "A Summer in New York"—El Gran Combo. Massive salsa by the classic Puerto Rican band.

31. "Be My Baby"—the Ronettes. Wall of Sound, wall of beehive hair. Opener for *Mean Streets*'s untopped soundtrack. Also straight outta the Brill Building: other "hitter girl" special "Leader of the Pack" by the Shangri-Las.

30. "Going to New York"—Jimmy Reed. Blues for long car rides, heading home. Leon Thomas's "Welcome to New York" ("It's a city full of fun . . . arts and roaches for everyone") jazz-blues companion.

29. "First We Take Manhattan"—Leonard Cohen. Cohen's "Suzanne": the Ur-sixties-girl-in-black-tights folk tune. Dave Von Ronk's "Georgie on the IRT," better for boys. Pinko antecedent: Woody Guthrie's "Talkin' Subway."

28. "YMCA"—Village People. Had to have it.

27. "Brooklyn (Owes the Charmer Under Me)"—Steely Dan. Some like "Daddy Don't Live in That New York City No More." Bad sneakers and a piña colada by Radio City.

26. "Way Out West on West End Avenue" as sung by Bobby Short. Cabaret geography. Short also sings "Upper Madison Avenue Blues."

25. "NYC Ghosts & Flowers"—Sonic Youth. Don't go above 14th Street, you'll get a nosebleed.

24. "Crosstown Traffic"—Jimi Hendrix. "You're just like crosstown traffic."

23. "Harlem Nocturne"—Earl Bostic. Tops "Rhapsody in Blue" for sheer cheesy bombast, an aural Chester Himes novel.

22. "Slum Goddess of the Lower East Side"—the Fugs. Haute beatniks. Similarly: "Luckiest Guy on the Lower East Side" by the Magnetic Fields.

21. "Sounds of Silence"—Simon and Garfunkel. Subway walls, tenement halls. Simon catalogue: "Me and Julio," "The Boxer," and "Paranoia Blues" ("I got the paranoia blues from knockin' around in New York City").

20. Theme from **"Car 54 Where Are You."** "Traffic's backed up to Jackson Heights . . . Khrushchev's due at Idlewild . . ." Close behind: theme from *The Jeffersons:* "Movin' on up . . . to a deluxe apartment in the sky . . ."

19. "Uptown"—the Crystals. Phil Spector protest tune. "Downtown, where everyone's his boss, he's a little man . . . uptown, where folks don't have to pay much rent . . . then he's tall, he don't crawl."

18. "Summer in the City"—Lovin' Spoonful. "Hot town, summer in the city, back of my neck getting burnt and gritty."

17. "Pedro Navaja"—Ruben Blades. Spectacular N.Y. salsa as Son of Sam narrative.

16. "Sidewalks of New York"—Mel Tormé, others. "East Side, West Side . . . me and Mamie O'Rourke . . ." Semi-disguised Irish drinking song.

15. "Boy From New York City"—AdLibs. Ooo-ah, ooo-ah, cool, cool kitty, tell us about the boy from New York City." Black street-corner doo-wop/R&B.

14. "The Wanderer"—Dion and the Belmonts. Italian street-corner doo-wop/R&B. Belmonts named after Belmont Ave., Bronx.

13. "Puttin' on the Ritz"—Irving Berlin. Can be read as subversive commentary on white-spats Park Avenue, where their "noses are in the air."

12. "NY State of Mind"—Nas. "I think of crime when I'm in a New York state of mind." New-school rap, bustin' caps all over town. Gang Starr's "New York Strait Talk" ("NY vibe gets your whole body tense . . ."); "City Is Mine," Jay-Z ("Don't worry about Brooklyn . . . got her a Chinese manicure hair done by Dominicans").

11. "A Letter to the New York Post" ("Worst piece of paper on the East Coast")—Public Enemy. Old-school rap, N.Y. nationalism. "Christmas in Hollis," Run-DMC; "No Sleep 'Till Brooklyn," Beastie Boys; and Grandmaster Flash's "New York, New York" and all-time champion "The Message."

10. "Scrapple From the Apple"—Charlie Parker. "Jumpin With Symphony Sid," down at the Royal Roost.

9. "Manhattan"—Rodgers and Hart. "The great big city's a wondrous toy, just made for a girl and boy." True.

8. "Up on the Roof"—Ben E. King/the Drifters. "If this world starts getting you down . . ." The promise of freedom from despair, upstairs.

7. "Give My Regards to Broadway"—George M. Cohan. And all those other songs about that street: "Lullabye of Broadway," "On Broadway," "45 Minutes From Broadway," "Boogaloo Down Broadway," "Funky Broadway," "There's a Broken Heart for Every Light on Broadway."

6. "Walk on the Wild Side/Waiting for My Man"—Lou Reed/The Velvet Underground. "Up to Lexington one-two-five," that New York telephone conversation rattling in our heads.

5. "Down in the Depths (on the 90th Floor)"—Cole Porter says, "I happen to like New York." So do we.

4. "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues"—Bob Dylan. Only line in the song about the city, but it is *the* line: "I'm going back to New York City, I do believe I've had enough."

3. "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker"—the Ramones. "Well, New York City really has it all, oh, yeah." Could have said 53rd and Third, could have said them all.

2. "Take the A Train"—Duke Ellington. Fastest way to Harlem, fastest way to Heaven.

1. "New York, New York" (It's a wonderful town). "The Bronx is up, the Battery's down." Leonard Bernstein, Comden and Green: And even swells like them rode "in a hole in the ground."

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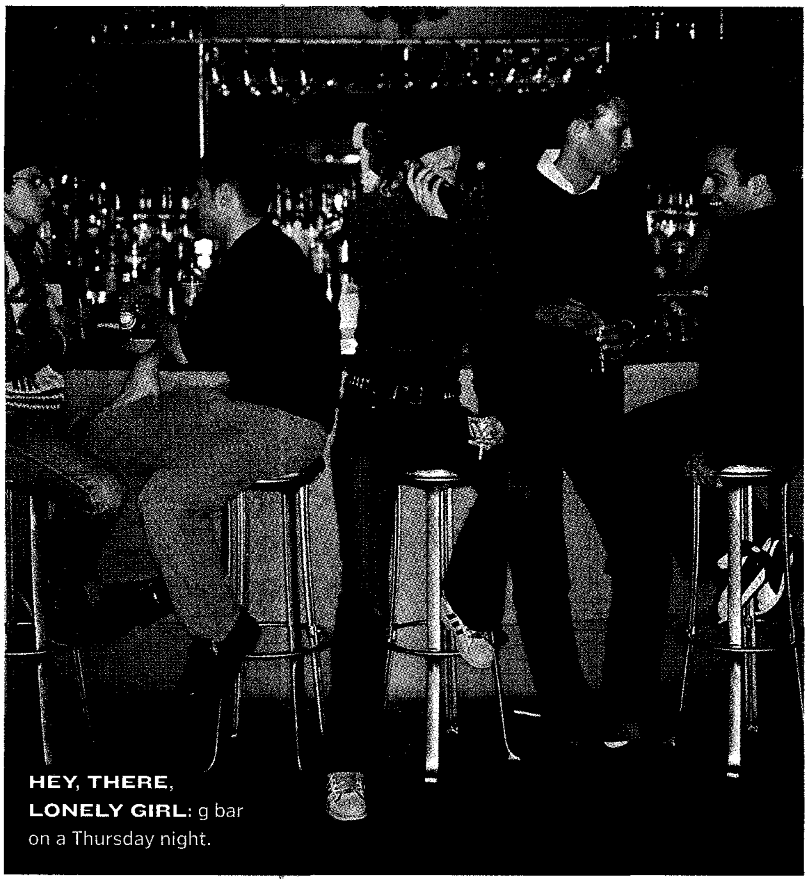

HEY, THERE, LONELY GIRL: g bar on a Thursday night.

THE GAY BAR

EDMUND WHITE PAYS A VISIT TO A NEW OLD HAUNT.

You might think that as a 62-year-old, five foot nine, 250-pound, bespectacled writer, I might not be the best judge of happening gay bars, especially since I haven't been in one in a decade. No matter. I do physically reside in Chelsea, and I am gay, so in that utterly misleading way I'm a Chelsea boy, and I've always been curious about g, the glamorous-looking bar humming to itself behind plate-glass windows on 19th Street.

It's long had a reputation as an S&M bar (as in "stand and model"), and I was afraid the doorman might turn me away. But then my barber said, "I hate g; it's full of older men hitting on younger ones."

"Older? Like how older?"

"Forty."

Luckily, I have a highly presentable young lover, a workaholic writer, so together we took the plunge—and found the place completely unintimidating. The bartenders are predictably buff, but at least they keep their shirts on. (My barber again: "In a classic gay bar, the waiters must stay dressed.")

Of course, for me, the Ur–classic gay bar was Julius in the Village, which I first visited in the mid-sixties. Mayor Wagner was closing gay bars as fast as they could open to clean up New York for the World's Fair. If he left Julius open, it was only because it was well-lit and had a few conspicuous women. There was even a period when we weren't allowed to face the bar but had to stand absurdly with our back to it to prove, I suppose, that we had nothing to hide.

Today, Julius is still going strong, and scores of other highly specialized bars exist, where drunks can caterwaul choruses of "Hello, Dolly," or white men ("rice queens," as they're sometimes called) can pick up the Asians who fancy them ("potato queens"). As for g, "we get all ages and races," said the barman. Not to mention that ultimate rara avis: women!

With crazy reportorial courage, my otherwise shy boyfriend went up to interview two men at the bar. Soon we were happily playing Do You Know?, comparing the Chicago Lyric Opera house to the Met, lamenting a mutual friend's alcoholism, praising the Avedon show—it all seemed pretty classic gay-bar chat to me, circa 1959, and I knew I wasn't all that far from heaven.

JOHN TURTURRO

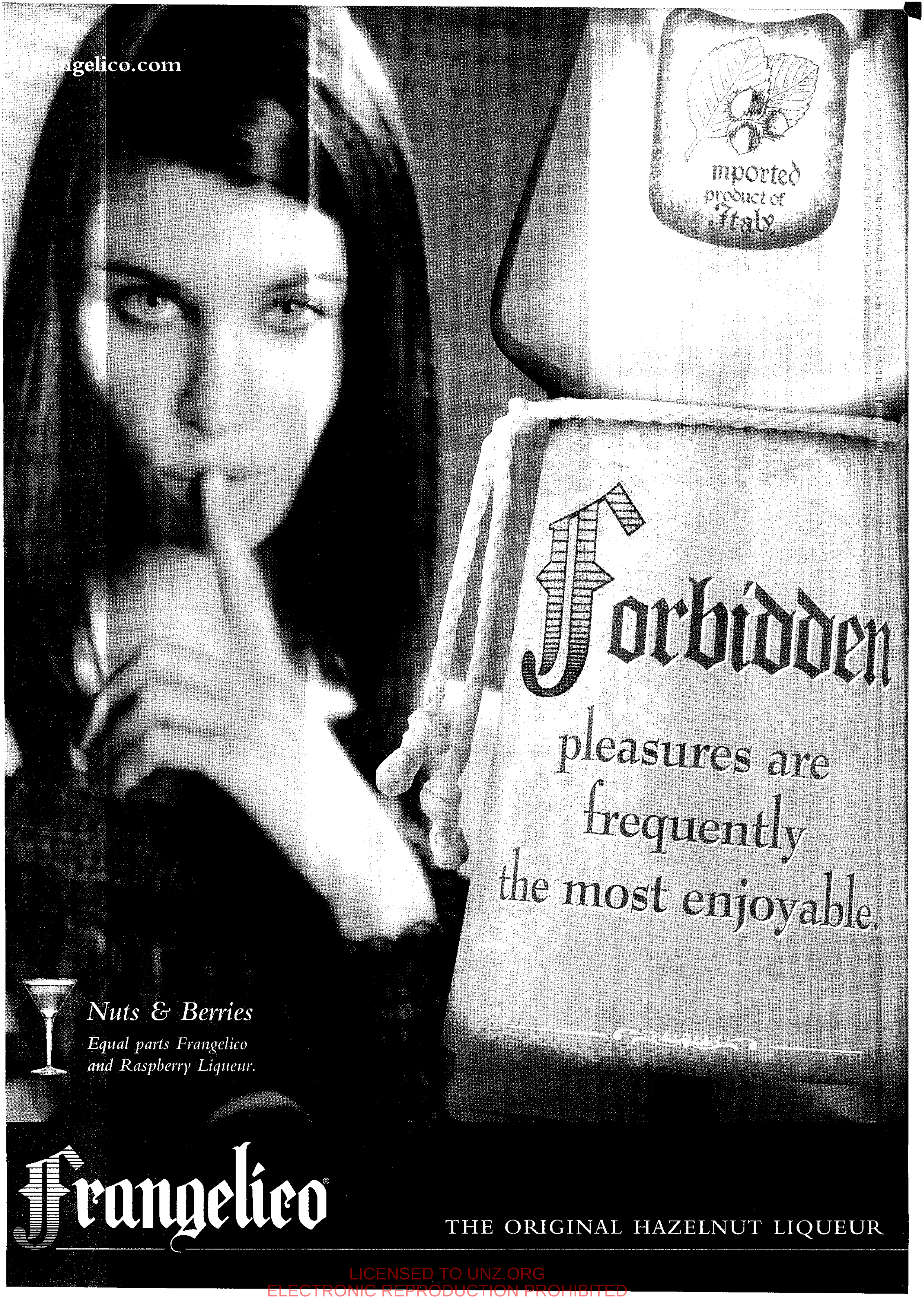
"The Brooklyn Bridge. I dream about it, and I like to walk over it. Not every day . . . but once in a while."

THE MEAN STREET

MARK JACOBSON ON THE ENDURING FRISSON OF THE SLUMS

Some fun went out of Fun City when Umberto's Clam House moved from Hester Street to Broome, because even if it was still Umberto's, it was no longer where Joey Gallo was shot dead while eating scungilli marinara. No doubt it was similar when the barbershop at the Park Sheraton on Seventh Avenue, scene of Albert Anastasia's last shave in 1957, was shuttered. New Yorkers, mostly a law-abiding bunch in favor in safe streets, nonetheless retain a possibly unhealthy but undying obsession with murder, mayhem, and the Mean Street. The so-called Bad Neighborhood has always been a lore-intensive New York Classic, dating back to when Bill the Butcher was cutting out the hearts of Dead Rabbit gangsters on the 1830s Bowery. The East Twenties were a no-go zone during the 1860s. Jacob Riis talks about the "criminality" bred by houses on Crosby Street inhabited by "101 adults and 91 children." During the 1920s, it was great sport for well-to-do downtowners to dip their toes into Harlem for a night, or week. During the post-white-flight years, the South Bronx, which saw 68,456 arsons between 1970 and '75 (an average of 33 a night), became the na-

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ERIC MCNATT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beacons marking the entrance to West 47th Street's Diamond Row . . . STEAKS, CHOPS, SEAFOOD . . . COFFEE, DONUTS, MUFFINS . . . Wave Hill . . . that black polka-dot pattern made by gum ground into the sidewalk . . . the Rockettes . . . the smell of horse manure outside the Plaza hotel . . . mangoes on a stick . . . film students shooting dramatic scenes in Tompkins Square Park with drunk old men looking on . . . building numbers that end with ½ . . . people camping outside the Public Theater waiting for tickets . . . jokes about combining the real-

tional symbol of urban apocalypse. More recently, certain urban adventurers have expressed deep nostalgia for the disappearance of Times Square's sleazoid sprawl. But not all mean streets can be vanquished by the slick swipe of the Rudy brush. The roster of "bad" neighborhoods—Bed-Stuy, Brownsville, East New York, Morrisania, Mott Haven—shrinks and expands with the economic winds. New waves of immigrants bring more opportunity, more mean streets. Right now, if you're in Sunset Park or Corona, steer clear of the Mexican gangs, the Crazy Homies, Los Traviesos ("the Troublemakers"), and Cachondos ("Horny Boys") with their MI VIDA LOCA tattoos. It is an eternal process. But a mean street is in the eye of the beholder. For years, whenever a poll was taken among cityside reporters, the overpass between the L and 3 trains at Livonia Avenue in East New York was voted "most mean." A recent visit, with the winter sun glinting off the razor coil around the train yards, revealed a slightly improved yet still somewhat hair-raising landscape. "Mean? Yeah," said one family man standing in front of his house. "It used to be mean, but not anymore. And you know why? Because we're here."

THE "IT" GIRL

IF THEY DON'T GROW UP, THEY NEVER GROW OLD, WRITES **LUCINDA ROSENFELD.**

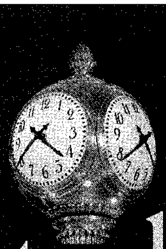
Rich, beautiful, devious, frivolous, oblivious, electric: The "It" girl is the Platonic ideal of youthful femininity to which all Manhattan arrivistes of the female persuasion in some sense aspire. What goes unmentioned in most modern discussions of the sisters Hilton et al., however, is that she is also a tragic figure. A morality tale in the making. The one who reassures us that we did the right thing trading in the nightlife for a nice guy and a stroller in Park Slope, or Montclair, or the Upper West Side. This is because "It"-ness perforce contains its opposite—dissolution, replacement, oblivion, non-"It"-ness. For this reason, leotard-glitter-fur-and-false-eyelashes-wearing Edie Sedgwick (pictured, left, 1966), the psycho-Wasp-waif-princess of Andy Warhol's 47th Street–era Factory, remains the *ne plus ultra* of "It" girls.

As recounted in George Plimpton and Jean Stein's still-riveting oral history *Edie,* the 21-year-old gamine was fresh from the psych ward and the open wound of the first of two brothers' suicides when she arrived at Grandma's house on East 71st Street in 1964. The trouble began shortly thereafter. Aside from the all-night parties, getting dressed was, for a while, the main activity in Edie Sedgwick's life. A signature style of black tights and geometric barely-there shift dresses soon emerged. Despite a barrage of desperate pleading, committing to one man, or (God forbid) a husband, was of no interest; the prep-schooler could barely commit to finishing a sentence—or a cigarette.

That Edie became Warhol's next "superstar" seems, in retrospect, inevitable. The two master manipulators were, for a while, each other's perfect match. They even began to dress alike, in matching striped boat-neck jerseys. But being an "It" girl had its necessary price.

The pill-addict-in-training soon became a full-fledged "poke" freak. The inevitable fall from Warholian grace came in 1966. Briefly, Edie found a new guru in Bob Dylan. The relationship didn't last, and the era of mattress fires began. Heroin beckoned, followed by the move to the Chelsea Hotel. Edie Sedgwick wound up dead from an alcohol and barbiturate overdose in Santa Barbara, California, four months married, recently shock-treated, and claiming to have gone drug-free. She was 28 years old. When I first moved to New York, in 1991, Sedgwick embodied my fantasies of weightlessness—she seemed to exist in a plane between the earth and the sky. Practical matters never touched her. In retrospect, it was probably just a fantasy of never growing up.

Destination Grand Central



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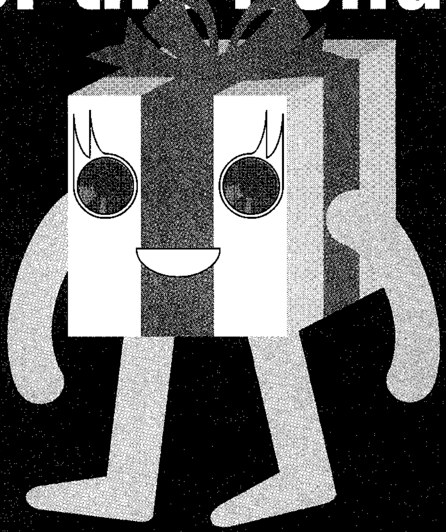

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estate and obituary sections of the paper . . . Jersey guys in ecstasy over all the obscene T-shirts on St. Marks Place . . . double-dutch jump rope . . . the black-and-white cookie . . . dogs in purses . . . 24-hour diners . . . the New York Public Library reading rooms . . . getting bumped into a thousand times a day . . . Columbia University . . . lox . . . opera at the Met . . . dentists and doctors with offices on the ground floor of Fifth Avenue apartment buildings . . .

THE SALE

DO YOU REALLY NEED A $4,000 RAINCOAT? ASKS **WENDY WASSERSTEIN**. YES—IF IT WAS REDUCED FROM $8,000.

Nirvana is finding a Fendi bag reduced from $800 to $200 in a bin at the Barneys sale. And it doesn't matter if it's a gold baguette layered with stray beaver fur and orange glitter stitching. Or the fact that it would only match an alien Halloween costume. It's the joy of the "get"; finding that designer-label piece of merchandise that's been reduced three times. It's the happy illusion that someone somewhere in the shopping universe once paid full price for this and you managed to pull it out for less than a third.

The twice-annual Barneys sale answers the perennial question "Who are all those 28-year-olds in size 4 skimpy dresses that are out at Pastis and Balthazar at midnight, and how can they afford it?" At eight in the morning, they are on line in jeans and trench coats. No longer glamorous, but New Yorkers looking to maintain a lifestyle. The great thing about the Barneys sale is, glamorous or not, we're all in it together.

If the average American is gaining weight, you'd never know it at the Barneys sale. There's an abundance of size 3 to 6 and plenty of Dolce & Gabbana leopard vests suited for the nightlife of six-foot amazons. I once came across a $12,000 blue silk schoolgirl frock for grown-ups, which was slashed to $8,000 and finally a supposedly affordable $4,000. It looked like the Christmas-party dress of a well-turned-out 6-year-old. I took heart that those Barneys bins probably had Prada patent-leather Mary Janes reduced from $800 to $600 to match. Like the theater, the Barneys sale is a self-contained world with its own rules that suddenly all make sense.

I was at the uptown Barneys last week, where I like to ride the escalators and glide past Jil Sander and Comme des Garçons items and wonder who is the size 6 person who buys them. On the very chic Christmas windows was a sign that said SALE. I was slightly disoriented. I like the thought of Barneys Uptown before Christmas as a New York fashion fantasy. Like Petula Clark, I like to go downtown to tough it out and get my mitts on sale.

MACY'S

MACY'S HAS BEEN A LEGEND since it opened in Herald Square in 1902 (the move uptown from 14th Street was considered risky at the time). Early on, the store boasted the world's first modern escalators, a "livestock floor," and a section for poultry shows. The owners (one of whom died on the *Titanic*) were the first to carry some of Thomas Edison's inventions. It remains the city's third-most-visited tourist site, after the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building. About 35,000 visitors come through each day; the day after Thanksgiving, the number approaches 75,000. About 160 extra employees are hired each year to play Santaland helpers—and just (there *is* a Santa Claus) one Santa. SARA CARDACE

THE ART GALLERY

DON'T BE AFRAID OF A LITTLE ARTFUL HOSTILITY, WRITES **SIMON DUMENCO**.

New York art galleries don't need velvet ropes or bouncers or clipboard Nazis. They've got architecture—forbidding, harshly lit, mostly windowless white architecture—to freeze out the riffraff.

As a scruffy teenager haunting the eighties gallery scene, though, I was unfazed. Through the filter of adolescent angst, nothing looked cooler to me than the city's art temples, in which I'd be ostentatiously ignored: An icy, fleeting glance from a gallerist would telegraph *You are not welcome here.*

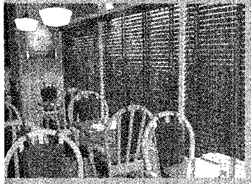
Are you sure I'm not one of the Beastie Boys? I'd attempt to subliminally convey. *Or that my daddy's not rich?* (Never worked, but feeling unwanted simply made me defiant: I'd linger even longer.)

Now, of course, the architectural-attitudinal art form known as the New York gallery has become something of an extreme sport, what with all those elaborate Chelsea conversions: taxi garages and industrial spaces turned into soaring art hangars.

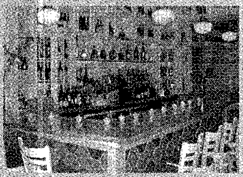
As an adult, I'm *still* made to feel unwelcome—but now I'm *luxuriously* unwelcome. In pristine spaces, with flawless gypsum and perfect 90-degree angles. Rather kind of all those dealers to go to the trouble, I have to say.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY XAVIER GUARDANS

nyc
New York City Café
NON-STOP NEW YORK



The popular West Village restaurant/café, New York City Café, will soon open its doors 24 hours, where one can enjoy this beautiful space and its exquisite food. The interior of the restaurant looks like a homey kitchen with red tables, white wainscoting and glass cabinets filled with colorful Americana glass and pottery. New York City Cafe smoothly merges "Traditional American" and "Classic Film Noir" ambience with a splash of contemporary New York Attitude.



Chef Herb Wilson (formerly of Zut, Bambou, and most recently Jacks of Fifth) flexes his formidable culinary muscles offering a Fall/Winter menu with delicious options and generous portions. It was Chef Wilson's creations that helped New York City Café obtain a two star rating from the New York Observer (2002). Sesame Yellow Fin Tuna with Warm Balsamic Soy Sauce and Pistachio Crusted Rack of Lamb are two noteworthy dishes.

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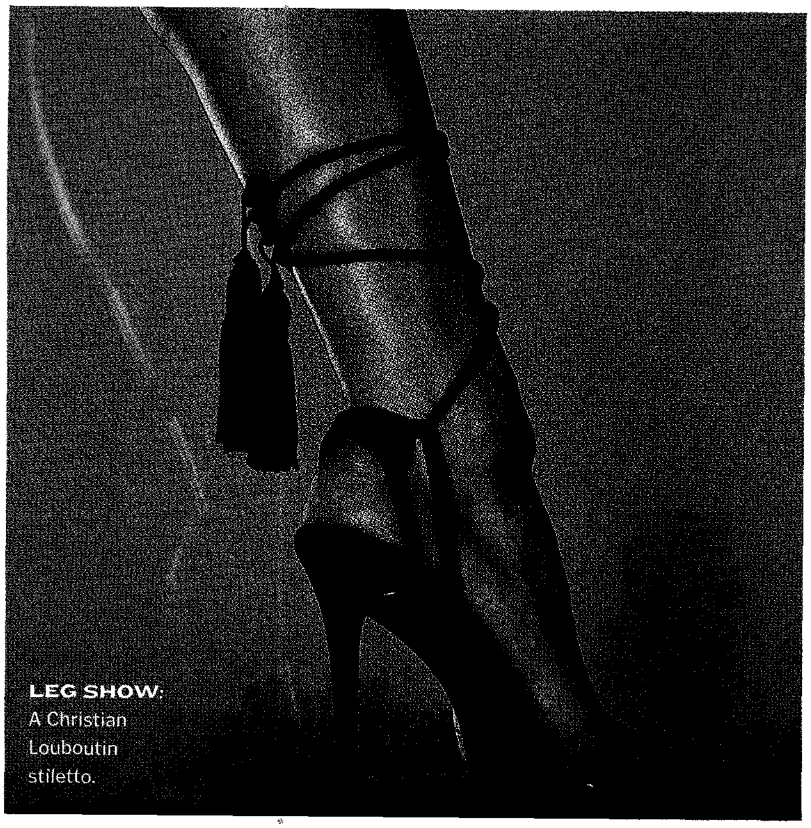


LEG SHOW: A Christian Louboutin stiletto.

DON'T BLOCK THE BOX . . . getting doused in beer at a Yankees game . . . gargoyles at the tops of buildings . . . strenuous testing of 2-year-olds for private preschool . . . *summer movies in* Bryant Park . . . the writer you know who doesn't write . . . making fun of those dopey New York *Times* TV spots—"She goes for the 'Arts & *Leisure,' and I head* straight for the magazine" . . . community gardens . . . window washers 50 feet in the air . . . Brooklyn high-school students hanging out UTB (under the bridge) . . . the Dakota . . . the Brooklyn Navy Yard . . . co-op boards . . . fire escapes . . . water towers . . . the confidence of living in the center of the universe.

THE STILETTO

CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN AND DIANE VON FURSTENBERG ON **THE NYC SHOE.**

It sticks in subway grates, snaps when you are walking home, late at night. And yet the stiletto is the shoe of New York: towering, a bit frivolous, elegant, gutsy. Diane Von Furstenberg and her best friend, shoe designer Christian Louboutin, describe its appeal.

CL: Stilettos are not done for running. I don't see why everybody always has to run. Who's running? It's a misunderstanding of life. There are very few reasons to run all day. It's mental! It's really mental! If you wear the stilettos, a man can . . . how you say, Diane?

DVF: Approach you. He has time. It's flirtatious. If you have good shoes, you master the stilettos. This is the secret of being a woman.

CL: It's a body language.

DVF: It's a total advantage. It's a gadget. It's a weapon in more ways than one.

CL: Sometimes people come to me and say I am blind to women's needs, high heels are so this and so that. Well, they wouldn't buy them if they didn't want to.

DVF: Shoes are something that give you joy! A weapon of destruction and a weapon of seduction, too.

CL: It's really for women to help with the men. They notice you, they turn. They see hair, they see the sole of your shoe. It's a *Suivez-moi, jeune homme.* Do you know this? "Young man, follow me," like the ladies who would drop the handkerchief.

DVF: Yes. The *suivez-moi* of the twentieth century.

THE TRENDY COCKTAIL

DALE DEGROFF ON MARTINIS, MADONNA, AND CHURCHILL'S MOM.

What's the quintessential New York cocktail?

The Manhattan, no question. It's the No. 2 of the cocktail-world superstars, second only to the martini. But the Manhattan has a singular New York story. Winston Churchill's American mother, Jennie, commissioned it for a party at the Manhattan Club celebrating Samuel Tilden's election as governor.

Who drinks Manhattans these days?

The type who believes that there are only three drinks in the world: the martini, the Manhattan, and straight whiskey.

Some HBO subscribers and Cosmopolitan drinkers might be shocked to hear this.

In the big picture, the Manhattan is a tidal wave and the Cosmopolitan is just lapping the shore gently.

You mean the Cosmopolitan is going the way of the Harvey Wallbanger?

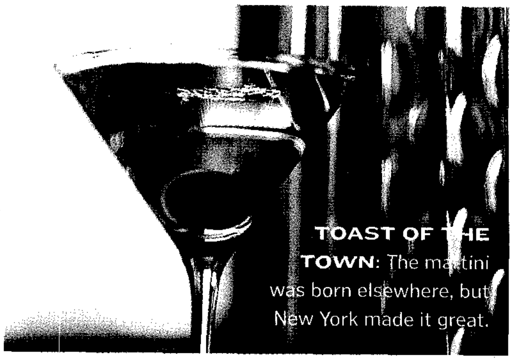
No, the Cosmopolitan isn't going anywhere. But it's funny that some people think that *Sex and the City* created the Cosmopolitan: It was around way, way, way before that. I mean . . . Madonna is the one who put it on the map.

So compared to Winston Churchill's mom, Madonna is just lapping the shore gently?

Maybe.

Shaken or stirred, what's your opinion?

When you have only spirits in a drink, like a martini or a Manhattan, you stir. When you have fruit, sweet, or multiple ingredients, you shake, because those kinds of cocktails are meant to be served, as Harry Craddock was wont to say, effervescent, or laughing at you. When you drink a Manhattan or a martini, you want the texture heavy, cold, and silky on your tongue. You do not want effervescent, light, and frothy. You do not want the thing laughing at you.



TOAST OF THE TOWN: The martini was born elsewhere, but New York made it great.

SHOE PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHAGO AKII-BUA & BRIAN JONES; DRINK PHOTOGRAPHED BY KENNETH CHEN

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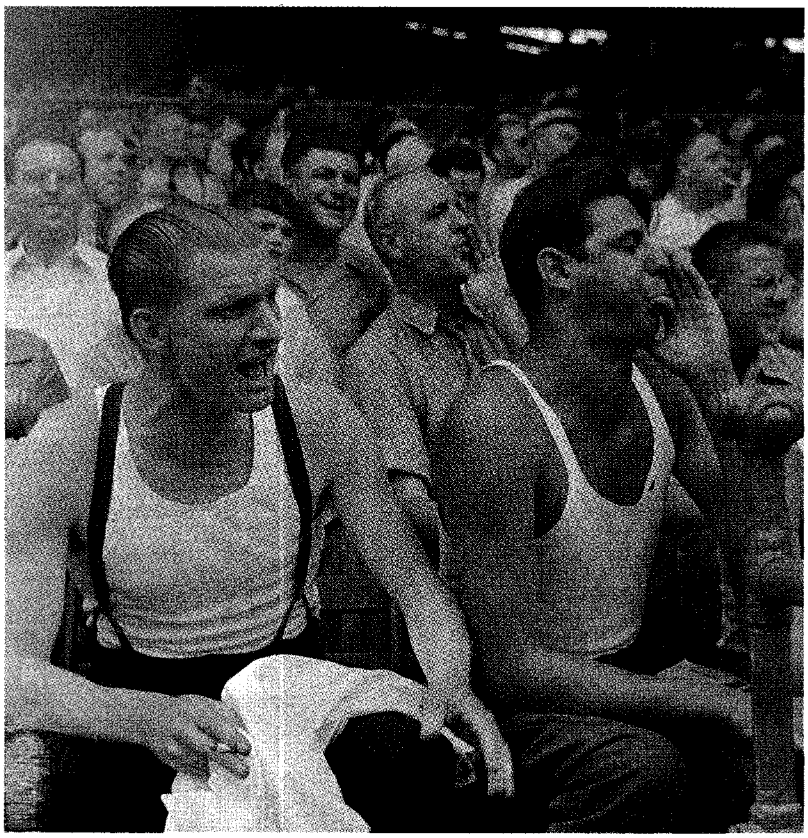


GHOSTS? BOO!
Razzing the Dodgers—dem bums—at Ebbets Field.

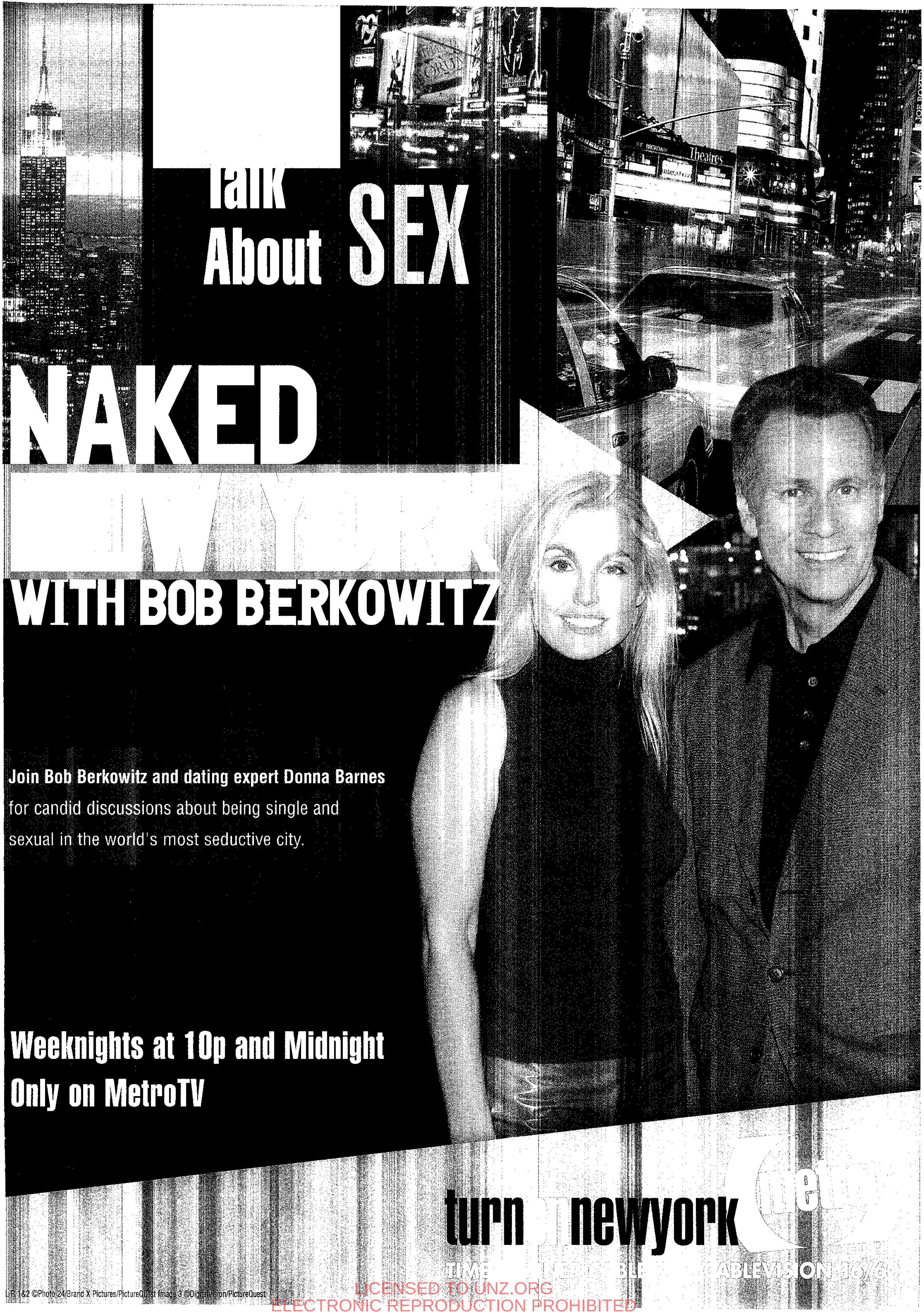
LOST NEW YORK

IN AN EVER-CHANGING CITY, NOSTALGIA IS THE ONE CONSTANT. AT LEAST THAT'S HOW **GEORGE KALOGERAKIS** REMEMBERS IT.

The city was different then. There's one day in particular I'll never forget. It was a Saturday morning, and I turned off the wireless—Mayor La Guardia was reading us the funnies during the newspaper strike—and bounded out of my tenement to pick up my two buddies, Hamill and Breslin (odd names for 11-year-old boys, but the city was different then), who duly bounded out of their respective tenements. We conferred on a stoop, striking sepia-toned poses, the pockets of our knickers bulging with Spaldeens because we never knew when we might be asked to join a class-transcending, ethnically diverse game of stickball that we could use as a poignant metaphor later in our professional lives. Downing egg creams served in real glasses by the memorably colorful character who owned the corner candy store, we then embarked on a grand tour of the boroughs, all five of which we'd all grown up in. First stop, Coney Island, where a few thrilling rides on the Cyclone emboldened us to bet on the mechanical horses at Steeplechase Park. Then we took in a rare mid-morning ballgame at Ebbets Field (the Bums lost), and afterward hopped a trolley across two rivers (the trolleys ran everywhere in those days—transportation was different then) to the honorary borough of New Jersey, where we gawked at the freak-show tents at Palisades Amusement Park. Next, via the Staten Island Ferry (a hard-earned nickel then; we learned early that there was no such thing as a free ride—childhood was different then) and a complicated series of connections involving more trolleys and the Third Avenue el, it was over to Freedomland, the amusement park out by Orchard Beach. Later, we enjoyed the matinee at Loew's Paradise near Fordham Road (they were having a Leo Gorcey festival, if I recall), then rode our bikes down to 161st Street and got autographs from Frank Gifford and the Bambino right in front of the Concourse Plaza Hotel. It had started to snow—it really snowed in New York in those days—so we warmed up with an ice-cream soda at Addie Valens, then sat in the bleachers at the Stadium (DiMaggio nearly ran into one of the monuments, deep-center hazards in those days—baseball was different then). There was more crowd noise coming from beyond Macombs Dam Park, over in Manhattan—the Polo Grounds!—so we raced across the bridge, laughing and tripping over the cobblestones (that's right, *cobblestone* bridges—the city's infrastructure was different then), to watch the Giants play. By now it was past lunchtime, and time to think about heading "downtown" for a bite at the Automat; otherwise, we'd be late to meet our pal McCourt (who'd be arriving at Penn Station—Penn Station was different then—by train from Ireland—Ireland was different then) for our big night on the town: the Stork Club, the Copa, El Morocco, then maybe Billie's late set on 52nd Street or possibly Dylan at Gerde's (Dylan was the same then).

DONNA KARAN
"That amazing panoramic view when you're coming back to the city. You see the skyline, the bridges, the lights of the city . . . and you're home."

But as we rose from our seats after the final out, a fedora-topped man in our section relayed a shocking bulletin that had just come over his pocket wireless: The Redcoats had attacked Pearl Harbor. Blanching (yet somehow retaining our sepia tones), we jumped the stadium turnstiles and, barely sidestepping a sailor bending back a young woman in a deep iconic kiss while a photographer snapped away, hit the streets of New York—a New York palpably and forever changed—all of us thinking exactly the same thing: Now is the then that the city will have been when, much later, we all remember how different it all was. ■



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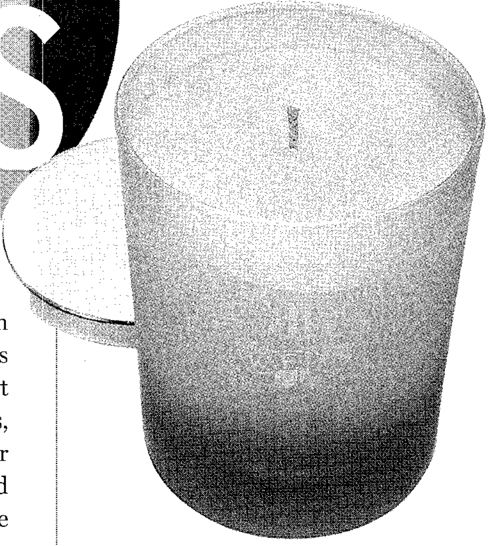
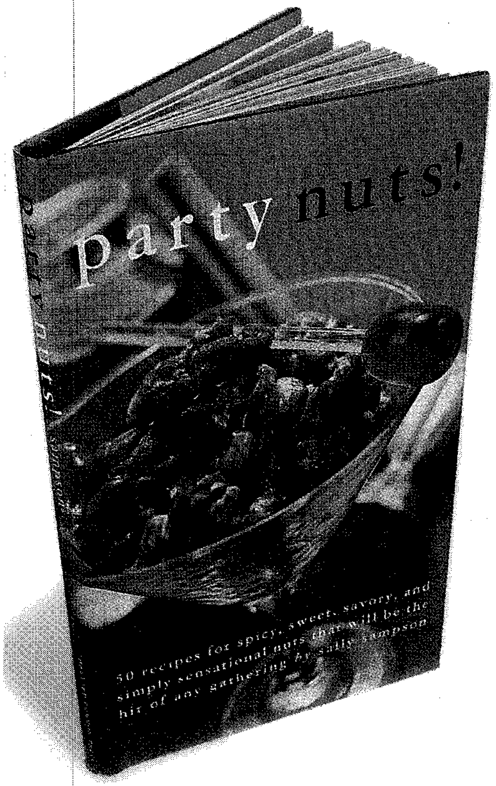
Best Bets

RIMA SUQI




party nuts!
50 recipes for spicy, sweet, savory, and simply sensational nuts that will be the hit of any gathering by sally sampson

Nutty Professor

Cookbook author Sally Sampson has been selling her delicious roasted Sampson's Nuts for over a year, but sadly, they aren't available in New York. The good news is, she's spilled (almost) all her secrets in her new book, *Party Nuts!* (The Harvard Common Press; $9.95). Recipes include rosemary walnuts, slow-roasted southern buttered pecans, and even smokey spicy peanuts. And it's all a lot easier to make than you'd think.

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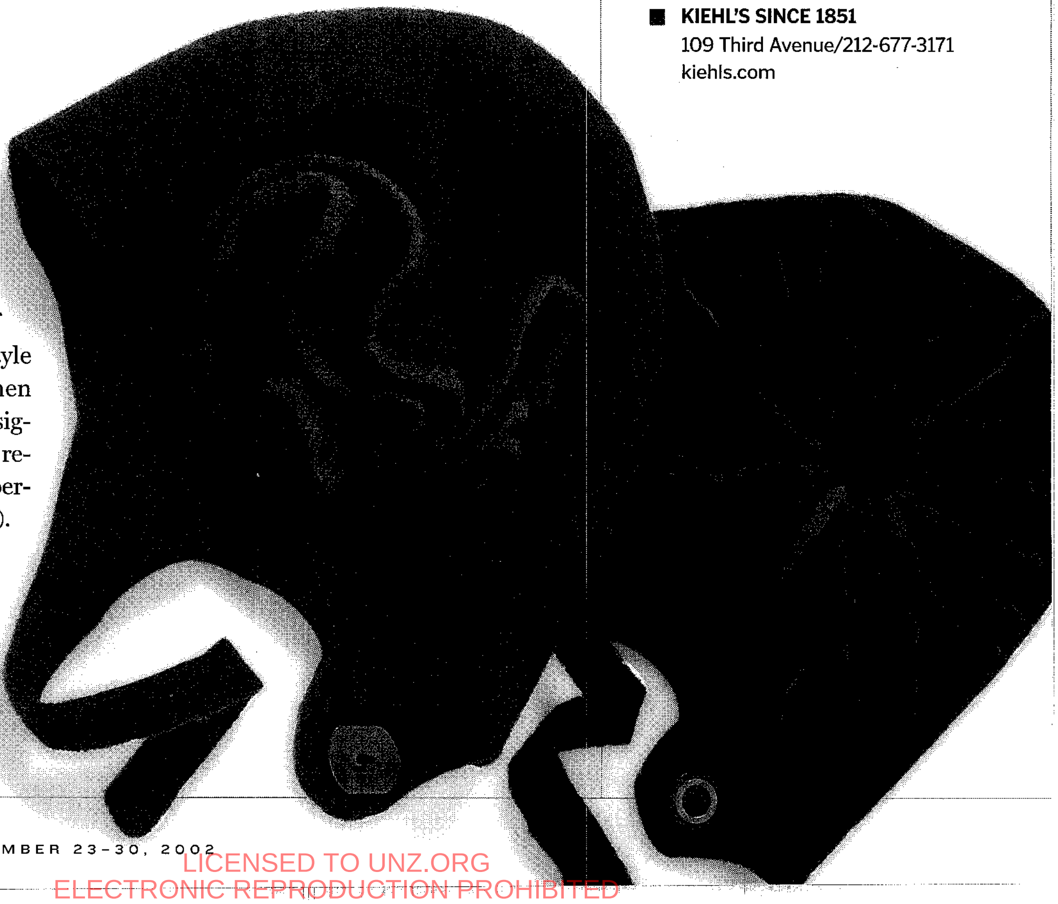

Hats Off

Emily Mills, a master's candidate at the Rhode Island School of Design, knits each of these cute swim-cap-style wool hats herself, then shrinks it, giving it her signature felt texture. The result fits snugly and is super-warm and stylish ($200).

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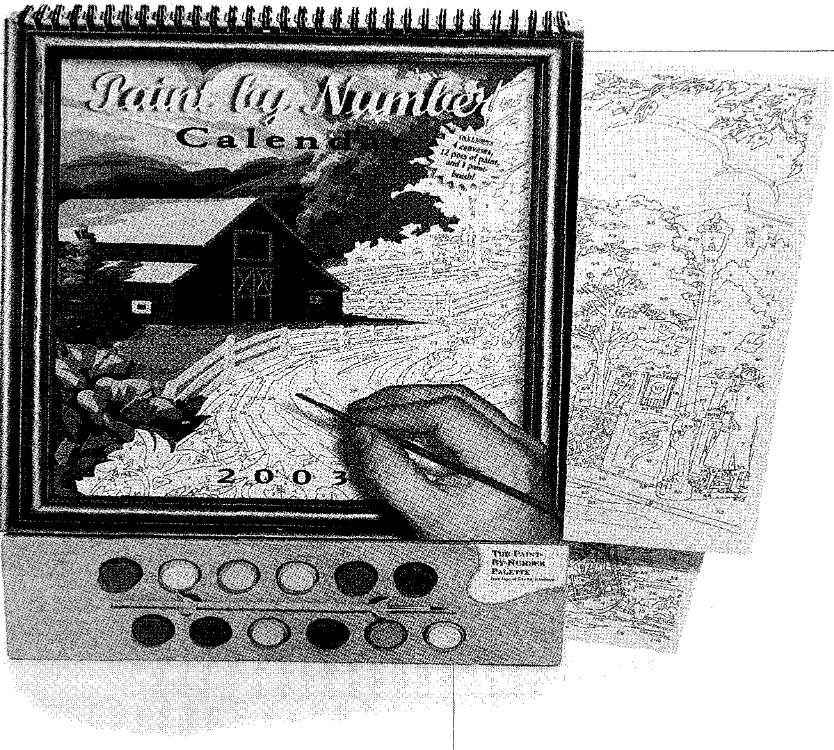
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Key 'Rings

For the fan of edgy-but-feminine accessories, we suggest Mine design's sweet "Lock" earrings. The 14-karat-yellow-gold miniature locks come with a dangling, removable key ($310).

■ **STEVEN ALAN**
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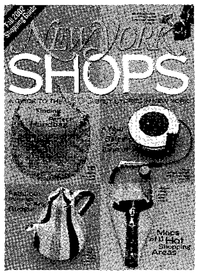
New York SHOPS

Check out the fall 2002 issue of **New York Shops**, our guide to the city's best stores, including a six-month roundup of "Best Bets." On sale at newsstands now. To order a copy, call 800-496-7833 ($4.99 plus $2 shipping and handling).

New Year's Resolution

Didn't get it together to send holiday greetings? It isn't too late. The January Card buys you a little extra time to send those pesky once-a-year missives—and gives you something to do while the rest of the world watches college football ($3 each or $23 for a pack of eight).

■ **MOON RIVER CHATTEL**
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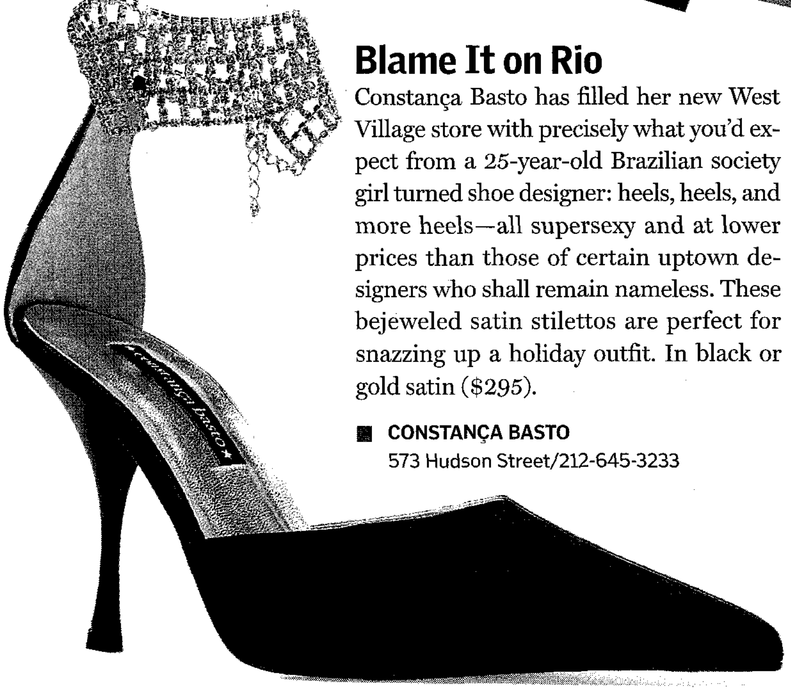

Constança Basto

Blame It on Rio

Constança Basto has filled her new West Village store with precisely what you'd expect from a 25-year-old Brazilian society girl turned shoe designer: heels, heels, and more heels—all supersexy and at lower prices than those of certain uptown designers who shall remain nameless. These bejeweled satin stilettos are perfect for snazzing up a holiday outfit. In black or gold satin ($295).

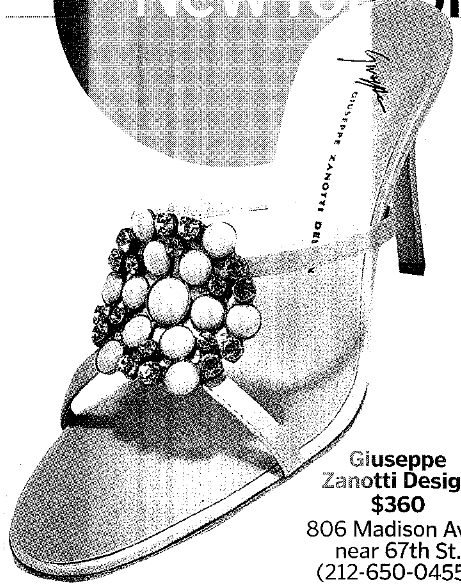
■ **CONSTANÇA BASTO**
573 Hudson Street/212-645-3233

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL KRAUS.

SHYAMA PATEL

Holiday Sparklers

The next best thing to bells on your toes? Festive, fabulous jewels on your feet. Here, the season's most magical evening shoes.



Giuseppe Zanotti Design
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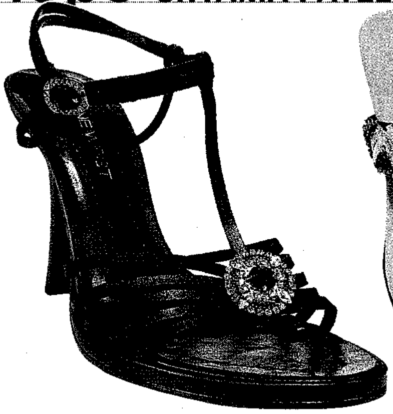
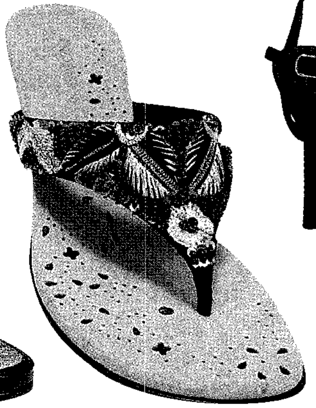


Nine West
$69 at Nine West stores (call 800-260-2227 for locations).



Enzo Angiolini
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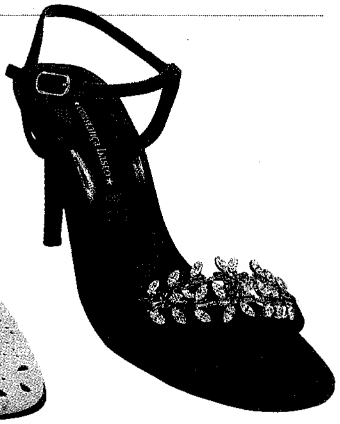
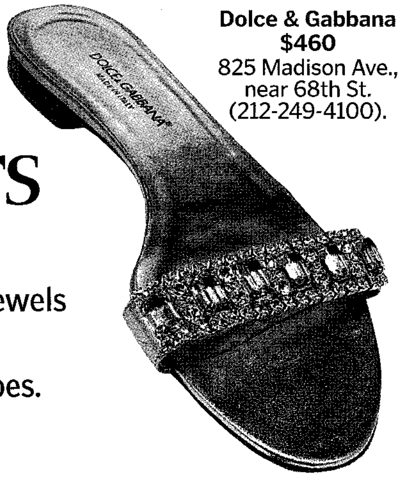
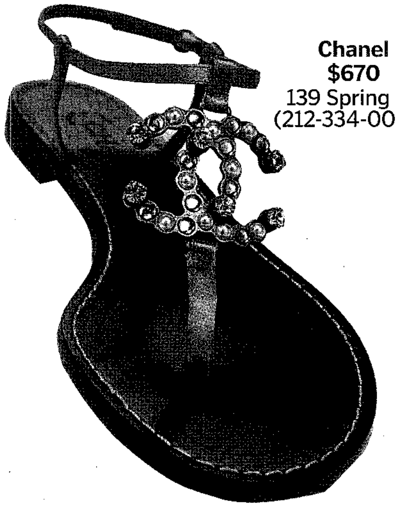


Constança Basto
$285
573 Hudson St. (212-645-3233).



Dolce & Gabbana
$460
825 Madison Ave., near 68th St. (212-249-4100).



Chanel
$670
139 Spring St. (212-334-0055).

December 18–31, 2002

Sales & Bargains

Paul Stuart is taking an extra 25 percent off already reduced women's clothes; a selection of cashmere sweaters are $217. 350 Madison Ave., at 45th St. (212-682-0320); A.E., M.C., V.; through 1/11 (Mon.-Fri. 8-7; Thurs. 8-7:30; Sat. 9-6; Sun. noon-6).

One of a Kind Bride's extravagant, storybook-princess gowns are usually $3,500 to $12,000; at the sale, samples are a mere $1,750 to $5,000. 89 Fifth Ave., near 17th St., room 902 (212-645-7123); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/18-1/17 (Tues.-Sun. 10:30-5) by appointment only.

Plein Sud's hip French fashion for women is 30 percent off ($130 to $1,900). For store locations and hours, call 212-472-9600; A.E., M.C., V.; through 1/15.

Cousin Claudine's trendy, handmade jewelry—seen at Scoop and Saks—is up to 75 percent off ($5 to $80). 315 W. 36th St., seventh fl. (212-446-6171); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/18 and 12/19 (8-6); 12/20 (8-2).

The Metropolitan Museum of Art Store has very giftable jewelry, Christmas ornaments, fashion accessories, and more for up to half off; Bamboo silk chiffon scarves are $27. For store information, call 800-662-3397; A.E., M.C., V.; 12/19-1/31.

Dickens, an Upper East Side men's-suiting store, is closing—and clearing stock at 70 percent off; overcoats, shoes, and suits, all from Italy, are $80 to $450. 1326 Third Ave., near 75th St. (212-249-6455); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/20-1/30 (Mon.-Fri. 11-7:30; Sat. 11-7; Sun. noon-6).

Small Change's pint-size clothes for kids are half off; prices are $23 for knits to $310 for a fur-trimmed down jacket. 964 Lexington Ave., near 70th St. (212-772-6455); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/26-2/1 (Mon.-Fri. 10-5:45; Sat. 10-4:45).

Steven Sclaroff's restored nineteenth- and twentieth-century furniture, lighting, and accessories are 30 percent off; upholstered armchairs are $1,260 (usually $1,800). 801 Greenwich St. (212-691-7814); A.E., M.C., V.; 12/18-12/20 (11-9); 12/21 and 12/22 (noon-6); 12/23 and 12/24 (11-7).

Martin—many fashion insiders' favorite shop for hip, well-priced staples—is clearing out low-rise jeans ($60), military jackets ($125), fitted trousers ($80), and more for 50 to 70 percent off. 206 E. 6th St. (212-358-0011); cash only; 12/18-12/20 (noon-7). ■

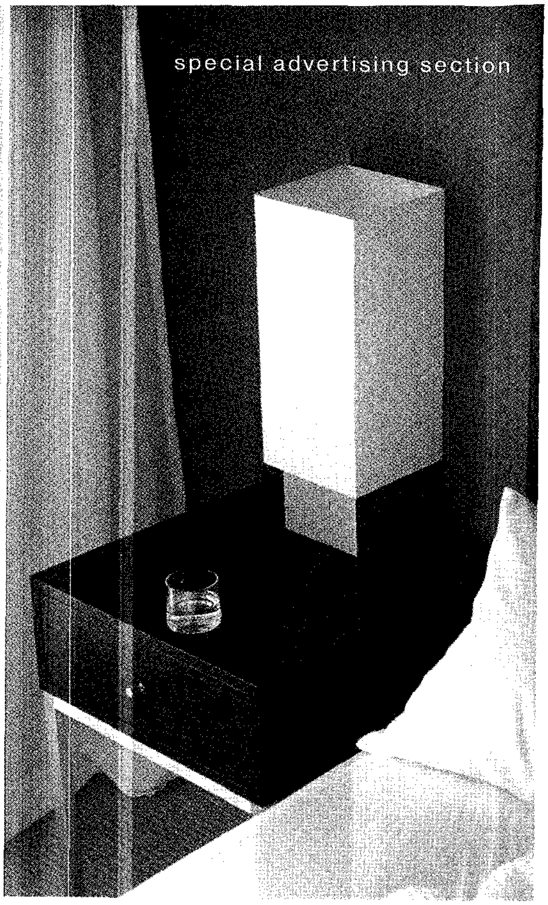
Check out the fall 2002 issue of **New York Shops**, our guide to the city's best stores, including a year's worth of "Sales & Bargains." On sale at newsstands now. To order a copy, call 800-496-7833 ($4.99 plus $2 shipping and handling).

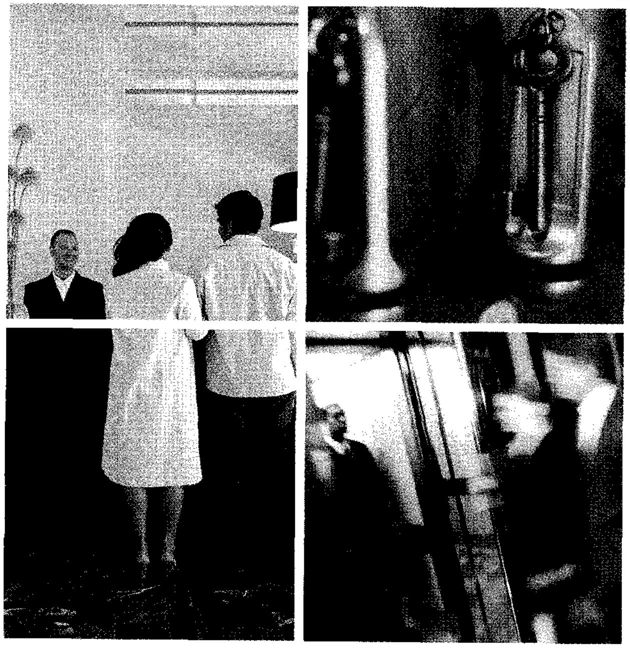
With Aja Mangum

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL KRAUS.

HOT HOTELS 2003

There's nothing like a winter getaway, whether it's across town or out of town. With an increasing focus on the regional traveler or the long-weekender, luxe hotels and lush resorts are tempting people to change their scenery, escape the winter doldrums, or simply take advantage of an offer they can't refuse. These properties, catering to your every need, will have you packing your bags in a New York minute.





W TAKES MANHATTAN. Quite likely, the most talked about hotel experience in recent years is one had at one of Manhattan's five sleek **W Hotels**—each a showcase of peerless style, service and sophistication. Their spacious rooms combine comfort, luxury and technology, state-of-the-art spas and fitness facilities rejuvenate the mind and body, and the staff responds enthusiastically to your every request. The combination of signature restaurants with award-winning chefs, hip bars from nightlife impresario Rande Gerber and the trademark Living Room lobbies make W Hotels the places to see and be seen. Travelers and local nightlife denizens flock to the fabulous five for some of the city's finest dining and nightlife. With so much under one roof, they're the perfect place to spend the weekend.

W New York–The Court, on East 39th Street, evokes the mood and glamour of the 1950s with modern style and understated elegance. The hotel's Living Room opens up to Wetbar, one of the city's most sought-after bars, and Icon, the phenomenal restaurant from renowned restaurateur Drew Nieporent. Close by, W New York–The Tuscany has a well-deserved reputation for sexy sophistication and provocative décor. Chic revelers gather at Cherry, another Rande Gerber sensation, while the W Café serves chef Brian Wieler's light, sumptuous fare.

W New York, the first property in this groundbreaking hotel group, remains a Midtown hot spot, attracting an eclectic crowd from the worlds of fashion, art, music, technology, finance, entertainment and publishing. Cocktails in the lobby, healthy, delicious meals at Heartbeat and late-night drinks at Whiskey Blue keep this hotel hopping.

W New York–Times Square, the flagship property, opened a year ago, in the center of the revitalized Times Square. This thoroughly modern 57-story hotel maintains a reserve through a Zen-inspired coolness. Dramatic waterfalls complement the Asian interpretation in the Living Room. The Whiskey Bar with its state-of-the-art screening room is yet another Rande Gerber creation, and master restaurateur Stephen Hanson has created a sensation in Blue Fin, a popular seafood restaurant.

And nestled in one of New York's hottest neighborhoods is W New York–Union Square. Originally the 1911 Guardian Life Building, this renovated space unites Beaux Arts style with W Hotels' innovative design. Underbar attracts a hip über-crowd, while celebrity chef Todd English attracts foodies to Olives, the Manhattan outpost of the award-winning Boston restaurant.

Fly High Holiday Package: Check in and receive a special holiday gift and voucher for a helicopter ride with Liberty Helicopters, choosing between the "Taste of New York" or

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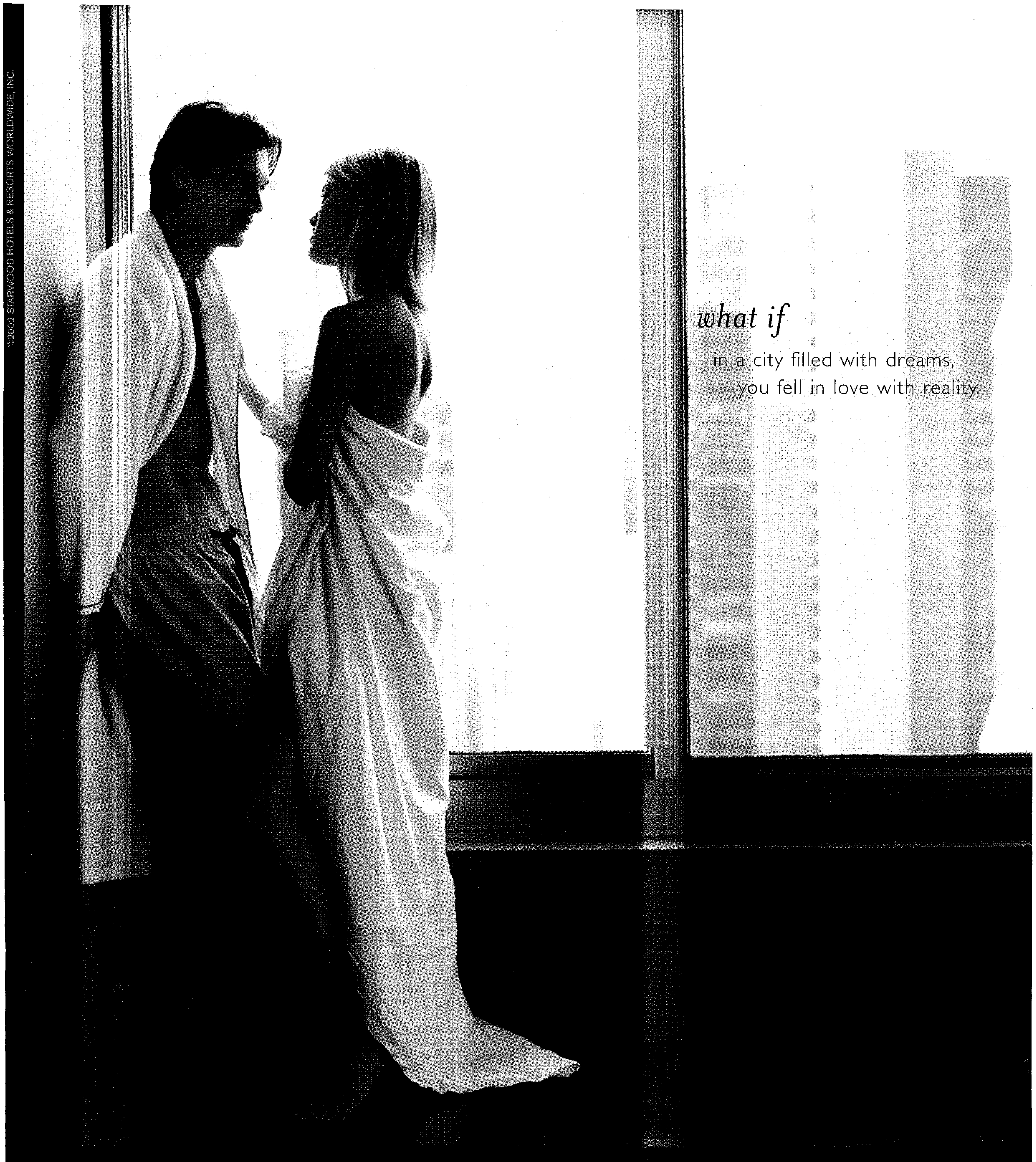
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MANHATTAN WINTER SALE

Hotel aficionados can experience Manhattan style in style—and at significant savings—with **The Leading Hotels of the World Ltd.**, which represents 400 of the finest hotels across the globe. Through March 31, The Leading Hotels of the World invites you to enjoy Manhattan's most luxurious hotels at savings up to 40 percent off the published rates. Some of the hotels may offer significant room upgrades or complimentary breakfast as part of the Manhattan Winter Sale.

The group boasts 10 extraordinary Manhattan properties, each singular in design, character and ambiance. These exceptional boutique properties meet the rigorous standards necessary to become part of this distinguished collection and include: **The Carlyle, The Hôtel Plaza Athénée, The Helmsley Park Lane Hotel, The Lowell, The Mark, The New York Palace, The Peninsula New York, The Plaza, The Trump International Hotel & Tower, The Regent Wall Street.**

CHIC BOUTIQUE

Business and pleasure mix easily at smart, stylish **Flatotel**, located in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, close to Rockefeller Center, the Theater District and Fifth Avenue shopping. Each newly renovated, oversized guest room boasts the best in comfort and convenience including such extras as customized beds with goose-down duvets and Egyptian cotton linens. Technophiles will be satisfied, too, with Aeron ergonomic chairs, dual-line direct-dial phones with data port and voice mail, high-speed Internet access, Sony 27-inch Wega flat-screen televisions, VCRs and CD players, and an in-room safe for laptop computers. Spacious and flexible meeting and entertaining spaces include a 2,400 square-foot conference center and the 6,000-square-foot outdoor Galleria that can be used year 'round.

EAST SIDE STYLE

Combine the ambiance of a fine home with unparalleled personal service and you'll find yourself at the East Side's charming **Hôtel Plaza Athénée.** The 115 guest rooms and 35 suites are elegantly appointed with marble baths, Belgian linens, fine toiletries, high-speed Internet access and Bose CD players. The hotel features the award-winning Arabelle restaurant, and Bar Seine, an intimate and eclectic lounge with plush velvets and leather floors.

Now through March 30, you can enjoy Continental breakfast for two or overnight parking, car transfer one way to the Theater District, a welcoming fruit basket, upgrades (depending on availability), early check in/late check out, a Madison Avenue shopping guide and discounts at selected boutiques. Rates from $310 per night.

LINCOLN CENTER LUXE. Impeccable service, style and sophistication await you at **The Phillips Club**, Manhattan's only private residence club, and the perfect retreat for those who frequent New York for business and pleasure. The staff prides itself on knowing guests by name – not surprisingly, more than half are repeat visitors. The elegant lobby of The Phillips Club offers a hint of the stunning residences upstairs. The junior suites, and one-, two-, and three-bedroom residences feature full kitchens, spacious marble bathrooms, Frette linens and high-speed Internet access. Guests may order room service from the on-site Balducci's kitchen, request individually prepared meals or ask the staff to shop for your groceries. Additional amenities include privileges at Reebok Sports Club/NY, a 24-hour business center and concierge, and in-room spa services.

ROOMS WITH A VIEW. The Marmara-Manhattan is a striking Upper East Side high-rise, custom-made for those seeking gracious accommodations during corporate relocations, apartment or townhouse renovations, as well as long-term visits. The spectacular studios, one-, two- and three bedroom accommodations—most with balconies—feature sweeping East River views. Fitness fans can work out on the premises or at a nearby health club. Guests may even hold private functions at The Rooftop Lounge and Terrace, a dramatic, glass-enclosed space with wraparound terrace and 360-degree views. The Gallery at The Marmara-Manhatttan showcases up-and-coming artists from New York and abroad.

HERE COMES THE SUN. Inspired by Mohegan culture and tradition, the luxurious 1,176-room **Mohegan Sun Hotel** is a tranquil oasis only a short distance from Manhattan. Guests walk into the spectacular lobby and step into a simulated cedar forest with reflecting pools and luminous skylights. Upstairs, spacious accommodations feature New England views, lavish bathrooms, deluxe bed linens, as well as comfortable workspaces with lounge chairs and two-line phones with data ports.

The 20,000-square-foot Elemis Spa offers a full array of superlative treatments and services, including spa services, whirlpools, 20 wet and dry treatment rooms and specialty suites, a sun terrace, indoor pool and fitness center.

Dinner and a movie is for amateurs.
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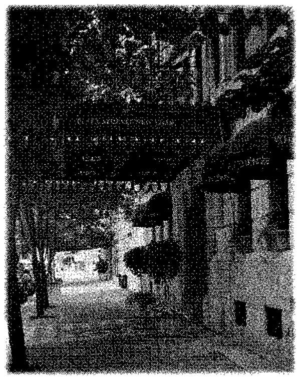

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SPECIAL PACKAGES: All packages feature deluxe or superior accommodations, gift in-room upon arrival, plus discounts on meals and entertainment.

- The **Escape** package includes a $15 dining incentive and a $10 free bet per person, per day. Rates: $99 per person or $198 per room, per night.
- The **Getaway** package includes a $70 dining incentive and a $15 free bet per person, per day. Rates: $149 per person or $298 per room, per night.
- The **Romance** package includes a $200 dining incentive and a $40 free bet per day, a gourmet basket and bottle of Champagne. Rates: $199 per person or $398 per room/night.

PHILADELPHIA WEEKEND. The **Philly Overnight™ Hotel Package** lets you experience Philadelphia and the region at great savings. Check in any Friday or Saturday through March 30 at more than 60 hotels in the city and countryside, pay for one night and enjoy the second night free. Rates for two nights start at $129.

Upon check in, you'll receive the

Philly Overnight Card™, which gives you a variety of two-for-one offers: the Philadelphia Trolley Works and a tour of sites such as Independence National Historical Park, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Chinatown and South Street. Or, use the card for a self-guided AudioWalk and Tour to the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall and Society Hill.

For kids, skating at River Rink at Penn's Landing and a visit to the renowned Franklin Institute Science Museum are top draws. Art lovers should head to First Friday in Old City (Jan. 3, Feb. 7 and March 7), when Old City's art galleries extend an invitation to view recent works of local and international artists. Blockbuster events all winter include New Year's Eve Weekend (Dec. 31-Jan. 1), the renowned Philadelphia Flower Show (March 2-9), and KitchenAid®: The Book and the Cook® (March 14-23) culinary festival.

SOUTHERN COMFORT. Take comfort at **Sea Island**, a five-mile-long coastal resort set amidst Georgia's idyllic Golden Isles. The Cloister, one of America's most famous resorts, has welcomed visitors for 75 years with true southern hospitality, gracious accommodations and fine dining. Open since March 2001, The Lodge at Sea Island is already a premier golf destination with 40 rooms overlooking the greens or the ocean. Sea Island Golf Club boasts 54 holes of extraordinary championship golf as well as its Beach Club featuring two pools and a well-appointed oceanfront spa.

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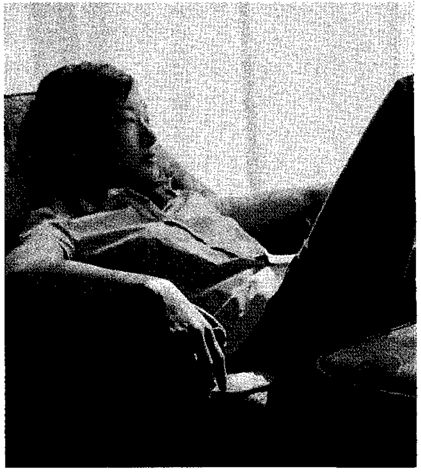
This venerable resort has a full calendar of festivities in 2003 to celebrate its 75th anniversary. The Food and Wine Classic XIX (Feb. 26 through March 2) gathers the nation's finest chefs and wineries in a four-day culinary extravaganza that will include cooking demonstrations, wine tastings, a Great Gatsby dinner and the Wine Gala and Auction. **75TH ANNIVERSARY PACKAGE:** Enjoy your third night for $75 and one round of golf at $75 per stay, plus special offerings at the Spa, Stables and Shooting School. Not available during holiday periods.

ISLAND LIVING. Leave winter behind at **Summer Beach Resort** on Florida's Amelia Island. Situated off the northeast coast, Amelia Island is a fascinating mix of history, charm and natural beauty. Couples and families alike enjoy this enchanted island on their own terms when they stay at Summer Beach Resort's choice accommodations, which include furnished condominiums, townhouses, villas and penthouses. Golf, jet skiing, parasailing, deep-sea fishing, bicycle riding and horseback riding are all within reach. For complete pampering, book a massage at The Ritz Carlton, Amelia Island. **SPECIAL RATES:** Now through February, book five nights, get two free (Sunday–Thursday). Book two nights, get one free (Friday–Sunday).

SUITE DEAL. The Tryall Club, an exclusive Caribbean resort set amidst 2,200 lush acres outside Montego Bay, features lovely villa accommodations, incomparable personal service and the Caribbean's best golf and ten-



nis. Stay in one of the 56 privately owned, two- to six-bedroom villas scattered across the hillside, all with panoramic views, private pools, manicured gardens and a fulltime staff. Or opt for the 18th-century Georgian Great House with suites, a superb restaurant, health club and meeting rooms. Though romance is always in the air—The Tryall Club is fast becoming a popular wedding destination—families also find the resort a superlative choice with the Kids Club and specially designed recreation programs.

QUALITY TIME. The award-winning **Royal Plantation Spa & Golf Resort** by Beaches is a top-line choice for sophisticated holidays. All-inclusive and non-intrusive, this hideaway in Ocho Rios, Jamaica offers 80 intimate suites—and total peace and seclusion. Guests (18 years of age and older) relax on two private beaches or beside any of the three private swimming pools. The celebrated Signature Spa has four deluxe treatment rooms, a couple's massage room, and a complete menu of treatments. Water sports, a fitness center, and tennis are right on the premises while golfers can tee off at the nearby Sandals Golf & Country Resort. The five-star Le Papillon restaurant is but one of three gourmet dining choices at the resort.

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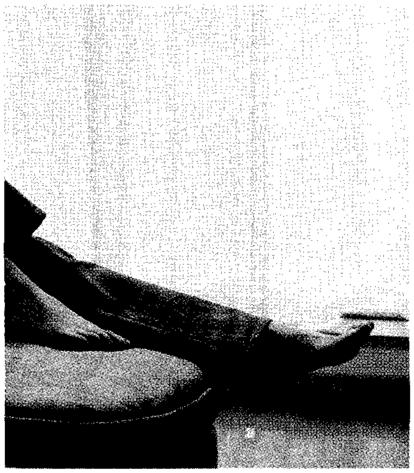

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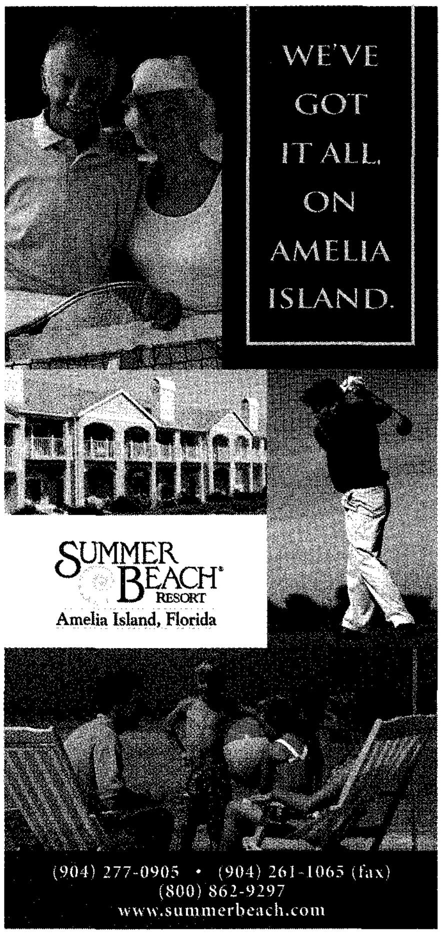

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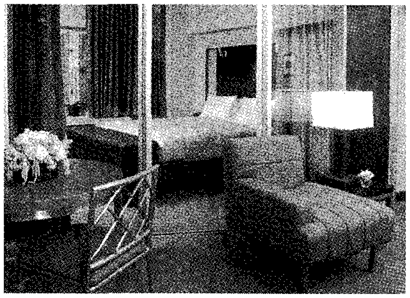

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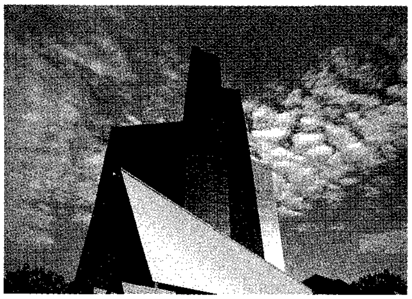

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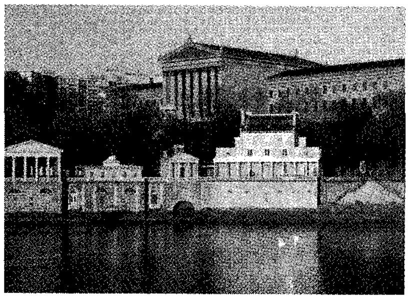

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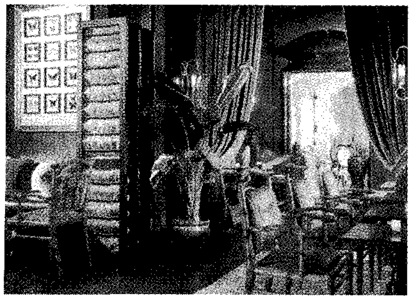

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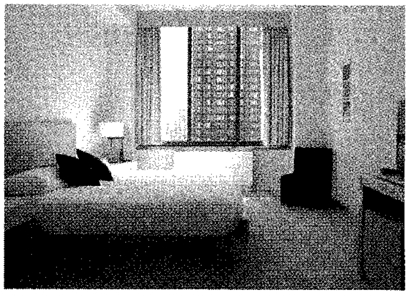

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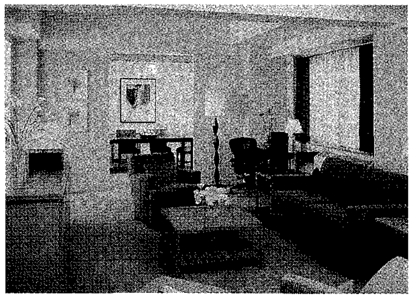

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A WEEKLY GUIDE TO CULTURE AND UPCOMING EVENTS • Edited by Christopher [illegible]

MOVIES

Catch Me If You Can

Apparently, Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks don't pack enough star wallop to open a movie these days . . . so, just to make sure, they've tossed Leonardo DiCaprio in. Leo plays a con man, Hanks the cop chasing him down. **(Opens December 25; see listing, page 127.)**

THEATER

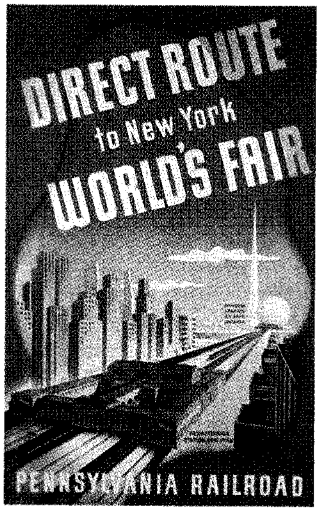
Dinner at Eight

The 1932 society comedy, by Algonquin Round Tablers George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber, returns to Broadway. **(Opens December 19; see highlight, page 138.)**

NIGHTLIFE

Phish at Madison Square Garden

New Year's is a tradition for Phish's dreadlocked followers (phollowers?); this year, the hippie quartet does New York, playing happy, trippy jams for a blissed-out crowd. Sold out, but true fans (phans?) always seem to find tickets. **(December 31; see listing, page 158.)**



AND LEAD US INTO PENN STATION: A 1939 poster from *Travel by Train.*

FLIGHT RISK: Con man Leonardo DiCaprio and crew in *Catch Me If You Can.*

BOOKS

Best of the Week

Travel by Train: The American Railroad Poster, 1870–1950

Years from now, will we all be collecting United Airlines posters? The romance of vanished travel routes and bold graphics make an irresistible combination—and an excellent holiday gift. **(By Michael E. Zega and John E. Gruber; Indiana University Press, $49.95; in bookstores now.)**

RESTAURANTS

New Year's Eve at Daniel

Why not spend the city's biggest social night with one of its greatest chefs? Daniel offers three options this year: three courses plus a show by cabaret singer Christine Andreas; a gala tasting menu with live jazz; and a pretheater dinner. **($350, $325, or $125; 60 East 65th Street; 212-288-0033.)**

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Rewarding Lives

The Merce Cunningham Dance Company premieres a new piece at Annie Leibovitz's portrait exhibition—in which Merce himself appears—with a three-night free concert at the World Financial Center. **(December 18 through 20; see listing, page 157.)**

ART

Walker Evans: Duplicate Photographs From the Museum of Modern Art

For its 1971 retrospective of the Depression-era master, MoMA commissioned new prints of Evans's most significant work. Recently deaccessioned by the museum, they've just landed at Pace/MacGill. **(32 East 57th Street; through January 18; see listing, page 144.)**

TOP five

Holiday Cocktails

What better way to warm up the Christmas season—or take the edge off the shopping scene—than with a spicy holiday drink?

1. **Hot buttered rum** Loaded with butterfat, this isn't a drink for calorie counters. But hell, it's the holidays: Try Gramercy Tavern's fruity spin, full of banana-infused rum and nutmeg. **(42 East 20th Street; 212-477-0777.)**

2. **Glögg** Take mulled wine to the next (Swedish) level: Raisins, almonds, and cardamom give the wine-port-brandy mixture a punch. If you're making it at home, invite your guests into the kitchen to watch you set it aflame. If you'd rather go out, stop by Ulrika's. **(115 East 60th Street; 212-355-7069.)**

3. **Eggnog** Though it's served cold, eggnog will still warm your spirits. Tavern on the Green's nog is rich and creamy and sure to leave a mustache. Don't think about the raw eggs—or just tell yourself that the brandy will take care of that. **(Central Park West near 66th Street; 212-873-3200.)**

4. **Spiked cocoa** You needn't decide between dessert or an after-dinner drink at Thom, where Godiva liqueur and Ketel One vodka meld together for an adults-only treat. **(60 Thompson Street; 212-219-2000.)**

5. **Hot spiced cider** With or without alcohol, cider just tastes like winter. At the Broome Street Bar, add a shot of brandy or rum for pizzazz. Tired of apples? AKA Cafe offers a pear version with rum. **(363 West Broadway, 212-925-2086; 49 Clinton Street, 212-979-6096.)**

ELLEN CARPENTER

Can't believe the holidays are here already?

Not to worry—**New York Metro** has been planning ahead. Visit our guide to restaurants, gift ideas, charities, and more at newyorkmetro.com/holidays.

NewYorkmetro.com

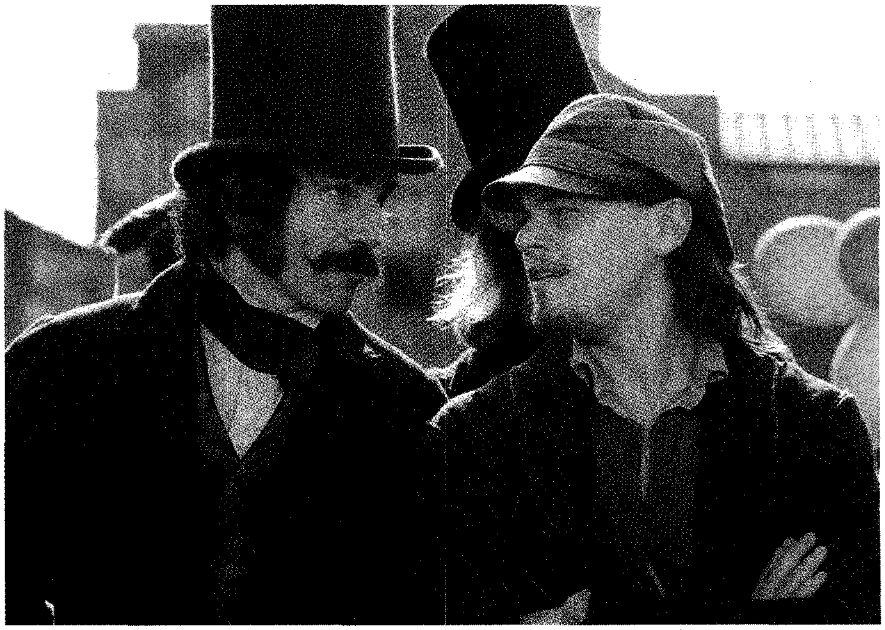
PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, ANDREW COOPER; SASCHA MAUER, 1939. THE MITCHELL WOLFSON JR. COLLECTION, THE WOLFSONIAN-FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY.

MOVIES PETER RAINER

Old-World Charm

In *Gangs of New York,* Martin Scorsese creates a nineteenth-century Gotham that is stunningly unfamiliar, but the same can't be said of his characters. *Catch Me If You Can* is brisk fun.

IF THE LOOK OF A MOVIE WERE enough to guarantee greatness, **Gangs of New York** would be a masterpiece. Martin Scorsese's long-awaited epic, set mostly in New York's notorious Five Points neighborhood in 1863, is designed with such poetic extravagance that it's as if we were watching a vast collective memory. Scorsese's New York has been scrupulously researched down to the last crevice and cobblestone, and yet we don't feel, as we often do in big period epics, that everything has been manufactured for our inspection. (The voluminous sets were constructed at Rome's Cinecittà Studios, and the production designer was the incomparable Dante Ferretti.) As a piece of visionary historical re-creation, with nary a digital effect in sight, *Gangs of New York* is stunning, and it has the added bonus of being about an era that is virtually new to movies. As a dramatic achievement, however, it is not quite so amazing.



KILLER LOOKS: Daniel Day-Lewis plays Bill the Butcher and Leonardo DiCaprio is his protégé in *Gangs of New York.*

The film begins with an excruciatingly violent street rumble between the American-born Nativists, led by William "Bill the Butcher" Cutting (Daniel Day-Lewis), and the Dead Rabbits, a gang of Irish Catholic immigrants led by Priest Vallon (Liam Neeson). In the ensuing mayhem, during which the street's snows are reddened and severed ears and noses are favored as trophies of combat, Vallon's young son, Amsterdam, witnesses the murder of his father by Bill. After sixteen years in the Hellgate House of Reform, Amsterdam (Leonardo DiCaprio) returns in 1863 to Five Points and, his real identity a secret, infiltrates Bill's gang with the sole intent of killing him. But Bill, who has no sons, grows fond of Amsterdam, especially after the boy saves him from an assassin. In one of the film's sharpest scenes, Bill, an actual butcher when he isn't ruling the roost, uses a carcass to demonstrate how to inflict mortal knife wounds. This is Bill's way of being affectionate. For Amsterdam, vengeance is tempered by his need for a father figure. "It's a funny thing being under the wing of a dragon," he says. "It's warmer than you think." Before these two face their inevitable confrontation, we are put through a panorama of historical events ranging from the mass immigration of the Irish and the corruptions of Boss Tweed (Jim Broadbent) to the 1863 Draft Riots, a conflagration lasting four days and nights.

Gangs of New York
Directed by Martin Scorsese; starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Daniel Day-Lewis, and Cameron Diaz.

The Lord of the Rings
Directed by Peter Jackson; starring Viggo Mortensen and John Rhys-Davies.

Catch Me If You Can
Directed by Steven Spielberg; starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks.

A great subject requires great characters and a large, unifying theme. The *Godfather* movies, to which this film may be compared in scope, offered a tragic vision of the American Dream. *Gangs of New York,* which was written by Jay Cocks, Kenneth Lonergan, and Steve Zaillian is a far less expansive and complex emotional experience. Its characters—its heroes and villains—are mostly traditional; they lack the richness to fill out the grandeur of the production design. Scorsese is caught in a conceptual bind: He is trying to make a movie that is hyperbolic, almost hallucinatory, in its historical perceptions, and yet also realistic in human terms. Sergio Leone, in a movie like *Once Upon a Time in America,* was able to get around this problem by, in effect, making his characters as overscaled as their surroundings. Scorsese plays it straighter. And so, with one exception, his characters—including not only DiCaprio's Amsterdam but also the orphaned thief Jenny (Cameron Diaz) he falls in love with, and his traitorous sidekick Johnny (Henry Thomas)—are the kind of people we've seen before in movies. The work of all these actors is deeply acceptable—and predictable.

The exception is Day-Lewis's Bill the Butcher, who strides about like some kind

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIO TURSI.

of Kabuki arachnid in stovepipe hat and waistcoat, and who has a thick handlebar mustache and a glass eye with a bald eagle imprinted on it. The genius of Day-Lewis's performance is that although he may look and sound like a cartoon meanie, his malice is chillingly real. Bill is a triumphant caricature who is all of a piece with the film's high-style folklorism. The movie was inspired by *The Gangs of New York*, Herbert Asbury's astonishing 1928 history of New York's underworld, and Bill, who is partially based on a real person, seems to have bounded right out of its pages. In his own deranged way, this butcher is honorable; each year, he celebrates the killing of Priest Vallon as a tribute to a fellow king, and imagines himself to be a true American because his father died fighting the British and because he can't abide foreign-born immigrants.

I think we are meant to see in Bill not only the deep-seated and bloodcurdling intolerance that is at the core of the American experience but also the frontier spirit that, at best, is its greatness. This is a burdensome load for any role to carry, and Day-Lewis almost pulls it off. But in the end, the film can't really support such a weight. What we're left with has the patness of a history lesson about our roots and the melting pot and what it means to be an American.

Scorsese often talks about moviemaking as if it were a religious calling. *Gangs of New York* is his mission to reconcile us with our violent past and achieve redemption. His instincts serve him better in the film's closing moments, when he fades from Five Points into the modern-day cityscape. It's a graceful way of showing that the imprint of those outlaw days is still upon us, and that the air is thick with phantoms.

LEONARDO DICAPRIO SHOWS UP AGAIN AS THE chief protagonist of Steven Spielberg's breezily enjoyable but thin **Catch Me If You Can.** It's based on the autobiographical book by Frank Abagnale Jr. about his four-year career in the mid-sixties as a master check forger who, beginning at age 16, also pretended to be a Pan Am co-pilot, a Harvard-trained physician, and a New Orleans attorney. The movie has a bright and colorful look appropriate to sixties pop and an amusing Road Runner–versus–Wile E. Coyote plot that pits Abagnale against dogged, dark-suited FBI agent Carl Hanratty, played with bureaucratic brio by Tom Hanks. We are lulled into believing that this pre-counterculture, pre-Vietnam America was a place where the innocent could more easily be bilked than in our own time. (More likely, the innocence remains; the bilking is just more sophisticated.) The real Abagnale was able to fool people because he was older-looking and prematurely gray, while DiCaprio, although he was 27 when he made the film, looks like a precocious teen. It's difficult to buy the fact that so many people could be taken in by such a stripling, but in every other respect, DiCaprio is a shrewd casting choice: There's an inscrutability to his boyish glamour that makes him something of a cipher; he may look like an open book, but he's not at all easy to read.

Early on, in films like *This Boy's Life* and *Marvin's Room*, DiCaprio had a seething undercurrent that separated him from most fresh-faced juvenile actors. Spielberg doesn't call upon DiCaprio to tap into that undercurrent and go beyond the blithe escapades of a kid con man, and the movie suffers for it. We are, after all, watching a movie about someone who relishes cheating people and treating them as dupes, and although Spielberg and his screenwriter, Jeff Nathanson, are careful to frame most of Frank's victims unsympathetically, we're still left feeling rather queasy. What's missing in Frank is any trace of cruelty or dark guile. Spielberg explains him away as a misguided but well-meaning product of a suburban broken home—Frank's down-on-his-luck-father is hauntingly well played by Christopher Walken—whose scams are meant to reconcile his divorced parents. This is well-tilled Spielbergian turf.

Despite Spielberg's periodic forays into darker realms, he may not have the comprehension of character required to do justice to someone like Frank Abagnale, who, after serving some prison time, was ultimately recruited as a fraud expert by the FBI and today is a highly successful entrepreneur in the security-systems field. (It's as if his ultimate scam was to go straight.) To a lesser degree, and with much more at stake, Spielberg revealed a similar lack of comprehension of the dark side in his presentation of Oskar Schindler in *Schindler's List*, who was also a species of con artist and who was made to seem righteously idealistic. I wish Spielberg hadn't shelved his oft-announced movie project about his boyhood hero Charles Lindbergh; the aviator's pro-Nazi sympathies would have challenged the director's complacencies and stretched him as an artist. For his latest movie, Spielberg can't be faulted for wanting to confect a simple entertainment after the heavy-going *A.I.* and *Minority Report*. The problem is, he's chosen a hero who is far from simple.

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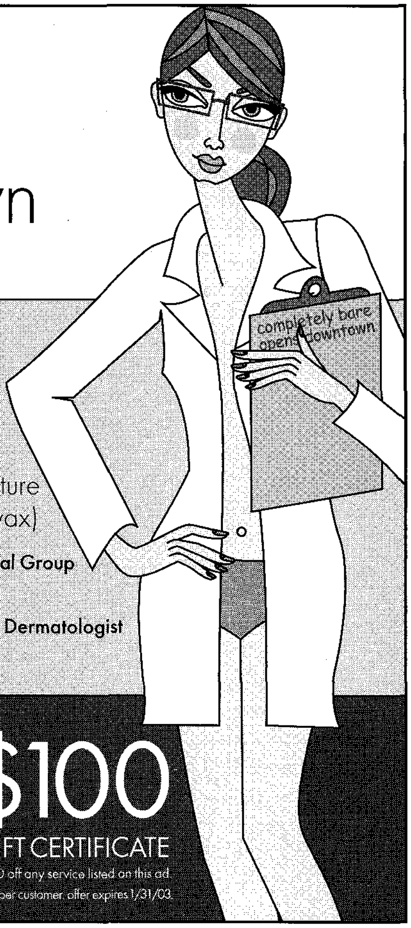

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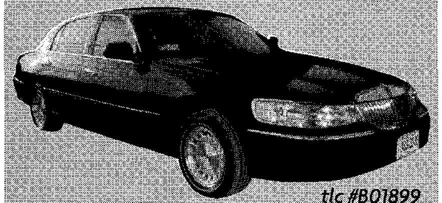

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THE NEW *LORD OF THE RINGS* MOVIE, **The Two Towers**, is darker and more fight-filled than *The Fellowship of the Ring*, and more vauntingly scary, too. It doesn't even begin with a recap of what came before: If you're not already a Tolkien true believer, director Peter Jackson isn't about to extend a helping hand. Jackson is essentially a horror maestro—he began his career in New Zealand making zombie movies like *Dead Alive* that were stupendously funny-icky—and he goes even further into gore this time around. When one of the scary-faced Uruk-hai (or was it an orc?) growls that humans look tasty, you look at the trembling hobbit in his sight lines and think to yourself, *Well, come to think of it, they do.* Still, Jackson has a genuine epic gift: Few filmmakers have ever given gross-outs such resplendence.

There have been a number of drop-adds in the cast since *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Elijah Wood's Frodo doesn't have major screen time this go-round, but thankfully, there's more of Viggo Mortensen's staunch Aragorn and John Rhys-Davies's hairball-ish dwarf Gimli, who, in the film's astounding climactic battle scene at the Rohan fortress Helm's Deep, is successfully tossed into a frothing phalanx of those pesky Uruks. Ian McKellen's Gandalf the Grey has been resurrected as Gandalf the White, a distinct sartorial improvement. Liv Tyler's elf Arwen is briefly back for another soft-focus reckoning with Aragorn (gauzy lyricism is not Jackson's forte), and her Elvish, in addition to sounding once again like pidgin Finnish, now appears to carry traces of Yiddish and Apache, too.

I was glad to see Brad Dourif turn up as a sinister court adviser aptly named Wormtongue; not many actors can make their grinning skulls protrude so distinctively through their own thin flesh. There's also a marvelous new addition called Treebeard, a walking, talking tree, who is the oldest living entity in Middle-Earth. Best is the near-naked, strangely voiced Gollum, once a Ringbearer, who promises to guide Frodo and Sam (Sean Astin) to the Black Gates of Mordor. An actor named Andy Serkis plays Gollum, whose movements have been translated digitally—the result is easily the best digital creature ever put on film. This second installment in the trilogy ends with Gandalf intoning that the battle for Middle-Earth is about to begin. I'm pumped. ■

Before you head for the theater, find out what **Peter Rainer** recommends at newyorkmetro.com/movies/rainer.

JOHN HOMANS

Panhandle Annie

The hero of Annie Proulx's new novel is overwhelmed by the Texas-size characters in his supporting cast—which is part of the fun.

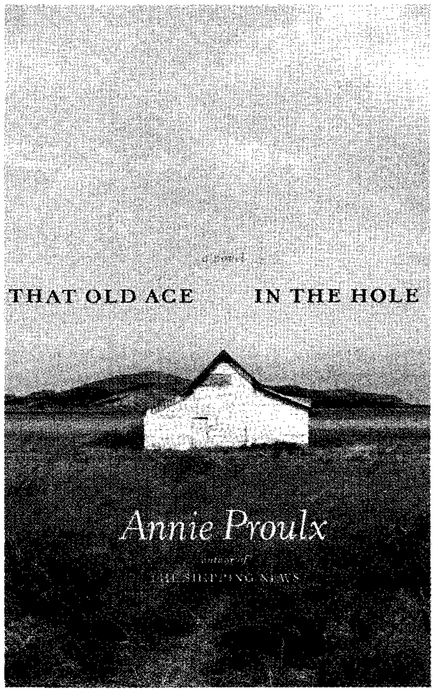
AS DESCRIBED BY ANNIE Proulx in her new novel, **That Old Ace in the Hole**, there's nothing more repugnant in terms of horror and cruelty and absolute distance from the natural order—Mordor for hogs—than an industrial-scale pig farm. Besides which, its lagoons of excrement produce a stench that's actually life-threatening. "Hog farms produce uninhabitable zones just as sure as if landmines was planted there," says Ace Crouch, whose name Proulx plays on for her title.

That being the case, think the proprietors of Global Pork Rind, what better place to situate such a thing than the Texas Panhandle? The land has always been blighted. Dust pits windshields and destroys women's stockings. Fallow fields are littered with rusted machinery. Roadside ditches are often the repositories for dead cows, which the authorities can't seem to get it together to remove. NIMBYism's hold on such a place would seem to be precarious.

Proulx's protagonist is Bob Dollar, a lost young man who's hired by Global Pork Rind to infiltrate the community of Woolybucket and identify ranchers who might be ready to sell. He takes a room with one LaVon Fronk, who's made it her life's mission to compile the Woolybucket Rural Compendium, and who knows the story of every ranch family in the Panhandle. For a real-estate scout, Fronk is an invaluable resource, but—how did you guess?—Dollar quickly becomes more interested in the people of Woolybucket and their stories than in his undercover mission.

That Old Ace in the Hole
By Annie Proulx.
Scribner; 359 pages; $26.

In this, he's much like his creator. Proulx clearly had a lot of fun researching this book. The voluminous acknowledgments document meetings with numerous Panhandle denizens. *That Old Ace in the Hole* often feels like a collection of folk tales, part of an oral tradition, a Panhandle Paul Bunyan. (Some of the details in the acknowledgments—a dust-bowl-era bird's nest, for instance, made of barbed wire—are as strange as the fiction.)



LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY: Proulx has produced a Panhandle Paul Bunyan.

Proulx is interested in the uncharted territory between American kitsch and genius. One of the emotional centers of the book is a quilting session hosted by Fronk and attended by all the town's ladies, to produce a quilt for a raffle. One of their quilts depicted Adam and Eve. Adam, his image based on the "hairiest man in the county," covers his privates with a cowboy hat. Proulx makes it so vivid—it's simultaneously passionate and ridiculous—that one can't help but want to see it. It ends up on the cover of *Art in America*. "Funny name for a magazine," observes Fronk.

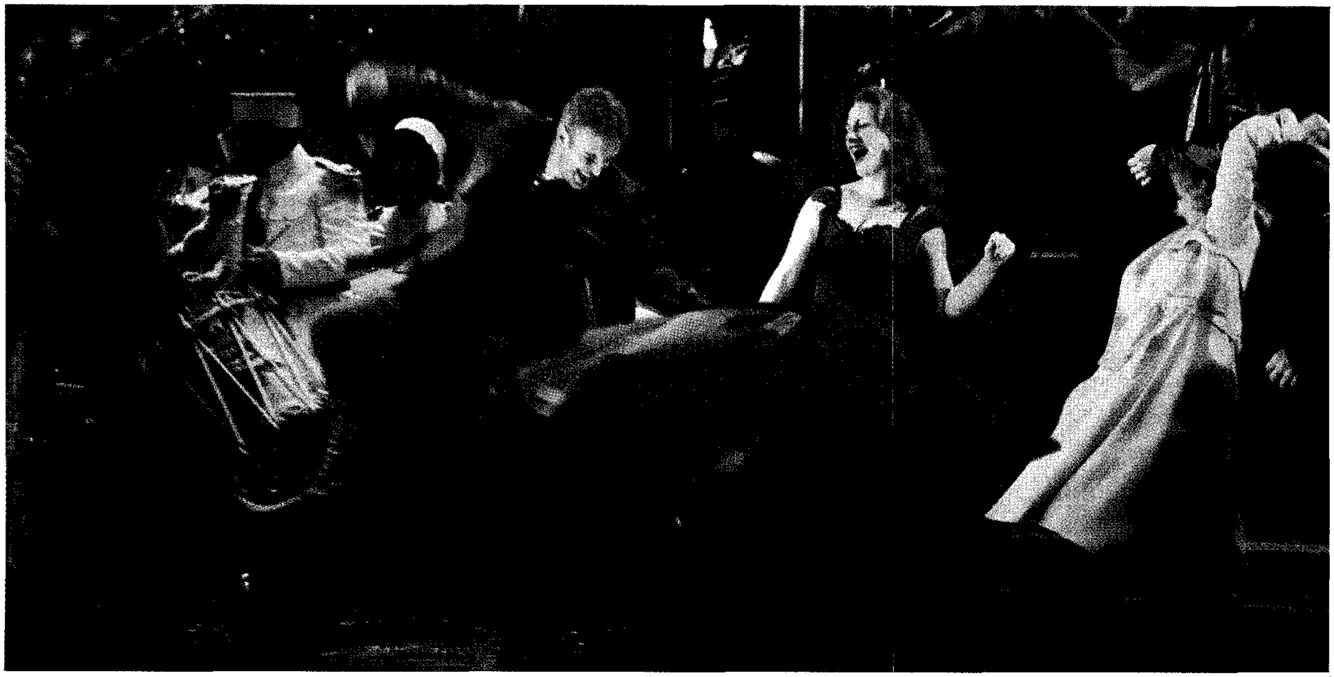
It makes sense that someone with a name like Proulx (the *l* and *x* are silent) would spend a lot of time thinking about names, and just as in *The Shipping News*, the names here are a big part of the pleasure: Blowy Cluck. Byrd Surby. Jim Skin. The incestuous Sheriff Hugh Dough. Rope Butt. (Speaking of butt, it's hard to imagine a more scatological female novelist than Proulx—she has Dollar's childhood friend Orlando, for instance, make a fortune selling a record of musical farting to frat boys.)

The Panhandle accent is sketched in deft gestural strokes. *Rayroad* for railroad, *war* for wire, *awl* for oil and owl. Similes similarly surprise. Stray conversations drift by "like trash in the wind." A woman's fingers are "stiff as a fork." Her sensibility is similar in certain ways to antic, whimsical cartoonists like Maira Kalman and Lynda Barry. There's a sense of reality that's been irresistibly twisted and amplified. Part of the excitement is that the charm stops just this side of being cloying.

As a human story, this book isn't anywhere near as satisfying as *The Shipping News*, because the battle for Bob Dollar's soul isn't a fair fight. The simple moral equation—corporate pig farms: bad; Woolybucketeers: good, for the most part, and oh-so-colorful; Bob Dollar: confused—doesn't force the book forward. The plot can be summarized as the scales slowly falling from Dollar's eyes. Even what should be central turning points—his ruse being discovered by Sheriff Dough, for instance—seem anticlimactic.

While Dollar—whom Woolybucket residents delight in calling Dime—eventually learns the awful truth about pig farms (he's surprisingly slow on the uptake, as if Proulx needed to prolong his self-discovery process for the sake of her other fictional aims), he seems almost as unformed at the end of the book as he is when it begins. Dollar is essentially a device for viewing the wonders of Proulx's Panhandle Lake Wobegon. It's hard for a reader to care about him—but Proulx's other gifts are such that a reader doesn't care that he doesn't care. Woolybucket is the book's lone star. ■

More book reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/books.



TB . . . OR NOT TB: David Miller as Rodolfo and Ekaterina Solovyeva as Mimi in *La Bohème,* updated by director Baz Luhrmann and designer Catherine Martin to 1957 Paris.

We'll Always Have Paris

The Puccini of Baz Luhrmann's almost manic *La Bohème* is hard to resist.

PETER G. DAVIS

ONLY THE MOST HARDENED AND MEANEST CLASSICAL-MUSIC critic would take a slam at the Baz Luhrmann production of **La Bohème.** It frolics at the Broadway Theatre like a happy puppy, and just the fact that it happened at all must be some kind of minor miracle. Opera may not be a total stranger to the Great White Way—for a while, 50 years back, it looked as though composer Gian Carlo Menotti might make his home there—but I can't recall an operatic classic ever playing on Broadway without being dumbed down beyond recognition.

This the Luhrmann *La Bohème* does not do. The score is intact and uncut; the singers are operatically trained; the orchestra, while a bit undernourished in the string department, plays what Puccini wrote; the original Italian text is used, although the hip English surtitles bring us up to date (painter Marcello tells us his ass is freezing off, musician Schaunard teaches bebop, etc.); and only diehard purists could object to the amplification, which is sophisticated enough to be barely noticeable.

Luhrmann has done a bit of tinkering with the piece, but nothing as extreme as what goes on nowadays in some opera houses, where the action is updated from 1840 to just about every conceivable time and place. This one opts for Paris, 1957, perhaps the most recent date that might work (the year after that, the French gov-

(continued on page 113)

La Bohème
The Puccini opera, staged by Baz Luhrmann and designed by Catherine Martin.
See Theater listings for details.

Baz Luhrmann's accessible bohemians lack some of Puccini's lyrical, spiritual beauty.

JOHN SIMON

LITTLE DID PUCCINI SUSPECT THAT HIS **La Bohème**, ADAPTED FROM the play Henri Murger adapted from his novel circa 1849, would continue to be readapted ad infinitum, if not ad nauseam. Joe Papp produced an English version starring Linda Ronstadt, Jonathan Larson slapped *Rent* on us, and Baz Luhrmann has now revived his 1990 Australian Opera mounting on Broadway.

Those of us subjected to Baz's *Romeo + Juliet* and *Moulin Rouge!* had reason to fear the worst; what we get is merely quirky and unremarkable. Performed in Italian with combined sur- and subtitles in an uncredited 1957 English vernacular updating, it sports references to an MG, a Rolls-Royce, and Marlon Brando. That the opera's third act, with its customs office, had to be relocated to the Franco-Belgian border, whither the tubercular and penniless Mimi could hardly have dragged herself, is the least of its problems. More problematic, in this computerized age, is the old-fashioned décor (by Mrs. Luhrmann, a.k.a. Catherine Martin), relying on wagons moved slowly by stagehands in full audience view. The orchestra, to fit into a Broadway pit, was reduced by Nicholas Kitsopoulos's orchestration; the conductor, Constantine Kitsopoulos, provides the requisite musical-comedy background.

So we get an array of young singers (nice idea), who presumably compensate with youth and acting

(continued on page 111)

PHOTOGRAPH BY SUE ADLER.

SIMON *Continued from page 110*

for less powerful voices. The buzzword, or Bazword, is *accessibility*, for luring young nonoperatic audiences to opera, dumbing-down not excluded. Thus the preface to the text informs us that to avoid anachronism, "the entomology [*sic*] of the slang" was carefully checked. Unchecked, however, were things like rendering "*Addio senza rancor*" in the titles as "Goodbye without regret," which may be more accessible than rancor, but makes no sense.

Visual innovations include a Café Momus and environs as neon-lit as Times Square; an exaggeratedly cramped bohemian attic fronted by a huge red sign that reads L'AMOUR, presumably to explicate what the show is about; handheld spotlights for, say, the firelight from the stove; a building with edgily exposed girders; an onstage balcony featuring scantily clad female and male whores; a vintage bemedaled military overcoat for Colline; and the British sugar daddy Alcindoro singing, for added verismo, in English.

The music still sounds seductive, and the alternating cast I caught sang almost as well as it looked. Ekaterina Solovyeva was an accomplished Mimi, and David Miller a personable Rodolfo. Chloë Wright was a full-throated and full-bodied Musetta, and Ben Davis, aside from some stiffness, satisfied as Marcello. The rest coped respectably enough. For the seasoned operagoer, here is a modest curiosity; for the rock-bound neophyte, a challenge to see if the show, like Musetta's shoe, really fits.

Dance of the Vampires IS BASED ON A FILM by Roman Polanski and a German book and lyrics by Michael Kunze, but with English lyrics and music by Jim Steinman, and an English book by Kunze, Steinman, and David Ives. If you want to know how many cooks it takes to spoil a brew, this is it, although here the very recipe was sickening. Camp needs to be truly funny and flawlessly executed. Not so with this clumsily contrived claptrap, which does not even relish what it is parodying—another missing prerequisite. There is something bloodless about these bloodsuckers, toothless about these fangs.

To give you some idea of how low the show stoops, its Transylvanian village is called Lower Belabartòkovitch. Professor Abronsius, the chief, albeit clumsy, vampire killer, travels with a transfusion apparatus but doesn't administer to the neediest—the show—which flickers forlornly, like a dying Sylvania lightbulb in search of a Trans. *(continued on page 112)*

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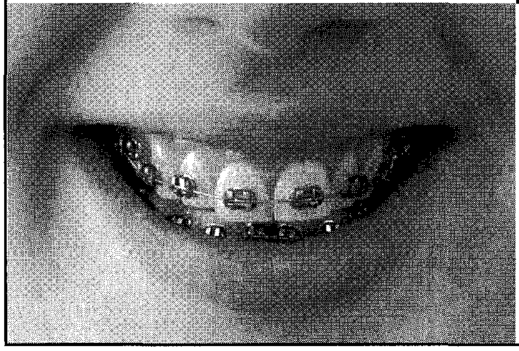
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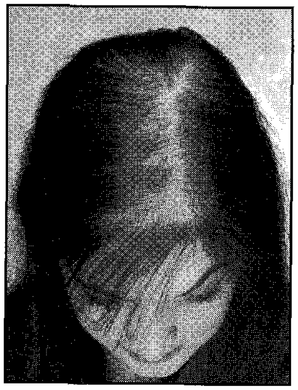

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SIMON *Continued from page 111*

Perhaps the biggest disappointment is Michael Crawford, who feebly rehashes his *Phantom of the Opera* performance and can't even muster a convincing Lower Belalugosian accent. As Sarah, the heroine, Mandy Gonzalez fails in acting, singing, and looks. Wasted are the acting talents of René Auberjonois and Mark Price, and the fine singing of Max von Essen.

The gifted David Gallo has devised scenery that, more expensive than impressive, shuttles between the ghoulish and the garish. Costumes and lighting do what they can, but neither John Carrafa's haphazard choreography nor John Rando's hit-or-miss direction—to say nothing of Steinman's music, mere vamping—can make what's dead undead.

NORA EPHRON'S **Imaginary Friends** IS A VERY clever play, and her dazzling director, Jack O'Brien, has made it even cleverer. It tells the vaudevillized story of two very different woman writers, Lillian Hellman and Mary McCarthy, who barely met in life but, being so different, heartily disliked each other. Near the end of their lives, Mary said in a TV interview that Lillian was a terrible writer whose every word was a lie, even *and* and *the*. Litigious Lillian, infuriated, sued Mary for millions she did not have, but died before it came to trial. Mary, frustrated, died soon afterward.

Dance of the Vampires
New musical starring Michael Crawford.

Imaginary Friends
Play with music by Nora Ephron, staged by Jack O'Brien, and starring Cherry Jones and Swoosie Kurtz.

Adult Entertainment
Comedy by Elaine May, staged by Stanley Donen.
See Theater listings for details.

Ephron perceives Hellman as a woman who as a child saw her father adulterously kiss a neighbor; instructed never to tell about it, she grew up a writer whose plays were fibbing fictions, whose memoirs were self-aggrandizing lies. Ephron's McCarthy, on the other hand, was told that her parents were alive when, in fact, they were dead. Disgusted, she grew into a writer whose writings, if not strictly nonfictional, were based on often hurtful truth.

This is slick oversimplification, though it serves Ephron as the infrastructure for a burlesque full of catty repartee, musical skits (by Marvin Hamlisch and Craig Carnelia), bits of actual documentaries in projection or reenactment, fantasy sequences. In the end, the grown Lillian and Mary become favorite adversaries and, as Ephron would have it, indispensable to each other's life stories and thus, in a sense, imaginary friends. It is a pretty conceit ingeniously helped along by the inventive director, the skillful choreographer (Jerry Mitchell), the amusing songs and dances, and the savvy design (Michael Levine's sets, Robert Morgan's costumes, Kenneth Posner's lighting). It makes for a sophisticated evening of cheeky merriment.

But there is something wrong with it. It trivializes too many things, elides too many complexities, flattens real sadness into a kissipoo ending. It gets glossed over not least by the fine, funny (though insufficiently evil) Lillian of Swoosie Kurtz, and the sublime Mary of Cherry Jones. And glossed over even more by the smart-ass infighting and frivolous music-hall format. Whatever flaws these two fascinating women had, they themselves were larger, and better, than this jolly jape allows.

WHILE NOT AS CLEVER AS EPHRON'S PLAY, Elaine May's **Adult Entertainment** is funnier. It is a true, generous-hearted comedy, perhaps a bit overlong, but generally hilarious and, at its peaks, uproarious. A group of four late-night cable-sex performers, three women and a man, along with their bumbling writer-director, decide to make a hard-core but also high-class movie. The women are the amiably blowsy and dimwitted Frosty Moons, the chipperly enterprising Heidi-the-Ho, and the poised Vixen Fox, along with the sweet, troubled gay man, Jimbo (sometimes Jumbo). Guy Akens, the writer-director, is a dignified but total no-talent.

After some scrumptious contretemps and fiascoes, they bring in as writer-director a young cameraman, Gerry DiMarco, a Yale Drama School graduate, marginally more capable and fiercely intellectual, who promptly has the five ignoramuses reading everything from Arthur Miller to Kafka and Yeats, not to mention teaching them such esoterica as what is a metaphor. Our innocents' turning into half-baked literati yields some wonderful jests.

Stanley Donen, the eminent film director, has staged this as an old-fashioned but uncensored movie farce, with lots of interpolated TV-camera trickery, and even bits of film. The late-night sex-TV sequences, complete with viewer call-ins, are riotous, but there is also some touching human interaction. Danny Aiello, Jeannie Berlin, Mary Birdsong, Brandon Demery, Erik Elice, and Linda Halaska are as deft with the clownish as with the sentimental, and the tongue-in-cheek production values match them all the way. ■

John Simon's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/simon.

ernment started inoculating for tuberculosis, and Mimi might have survived), and except for some now-meaningless topical references in the original text, no harm is done. I saw two of three casts, and everyone is as young and personable as Puccini might have hoped for (not really the innovation Luhrmann seems to think—the City Opera has been casting *La Bohème* with appealing young singing actors for decades). The voices themselves are unremarkable but perfectly acceptable. I heard no potential Met megastars, but everyone sings attractively and gives 100 percent.

So what we have here, essentially, is a better-than-average provincial *La Bohème,* not one for seasoned operagoers perhaps, but one that may well appeal to virgin audiences, which is, I guess, the whole point. I think Luhrmann does go overboard trying to keep us entertained—the bohemians' high jinks in Acts One and Four verge on the manic—but he has added much character detail, especially to the two sets of lovers. Amid the bustle of the Café Momus scene, Mimi gives a little boy a coin so he can buy his toy drum, and later Musetta gives another delighted lad a squeeze and a tickle—tiny moments, so characteristic of these two very different but enchanting girls, and very much in the spirit of Puccini's concern with life's *piccole cose.*

Catherine Martin's sets are just as detailed and flavorful as the action, a Parisian panorama somewhere between Zeffirelli's lavish tourist attraction at the Met and the City Opera's current somber edition, which locates the action around the time of World War I. As at the Met, the bohemians occasionally take us out of their garret for horseplay on the roof, and the crossroads that lead to the Café Momus could not be busier—it would probably require a dozen visits to the show to take in all the activities going on in the shops, bordellos, nooks, and crannies. Opera buffs have seen it all before, and with more distinctive singing. But if this lively *La Bohème,* a far more legitimate operatic enterprise than all the crooning mock-opera phonies who now clog PBS, can make converts to the real thing, then I hope it runs for twenty years.

THE CHANCE TO RETHINK, REVISE, AND tweak a new opera for a second high-profile performance comes to few composers, so William Bolcom must feel like a lucky man. His operatic setting of Arthur Miller's 1955 play, **A View From the Bridge,** was launched in Chicago three years ago with great fanfare and to generally favorable press, but instead of being shelved and forgotten—the fate of even well-received new operas these days—the work has just been taken up by the Metropolitan Opera. The Met production, directed by Frank Galati and designed by Santo Loquasto, is the same as seen in Chicago, and the cast remains substantially unchanged. But Bolcom and his librettists, Arnold Weinstein and the playwright himself, have taken the opportunity to make enough alterations in the work to produce what the composer now calls "the New York version."

A View From the Bridge
Metropolitan Opera presentation of an opera by William Bolcom, based on the Arthur Miller play.

Winterreise
The Schubert cycle, staged by Trisha Brown.
See Classical & Dance Listings for details.

There was already much to admire in the first edition. The play has been craftily adapted to retain the drama's taut structure, and Bolcom has provided an apt and theatrically savvy score in an eclectic, accessible idiom that efficiently underlines the action without getting in the way. What I missed, in Chicago and New York, was music that individualizes the characters, digs beneath the surface, and sings with eloquence—something must be wrong with an opera whose most memorable tune is a borrowed pop song ("Paper Moon") written in 1915. Most damagingly, Bolcom never really addresses the problem of how to portray a hero as inarticulate and unaware as Eddie Carbone, the Brooklyn dockworker whose fatal attraction to his niece results in his death. In the opera, Eddie exists as a figure with a strong dramatic presence, thanks largely to Kim Josephson's forceful acting, but one who has no arresting musical definition.

Bolcom apparently recognized this and has beefed up Eddie's part somewhat, but whatever doctoring he has done doesn't seem to add much detail, perspective, or insight into this troubled character. His wife, Bea, now has more to sing, welcome additions that do fill in the dilemma of a caught-in-the-middle woman whose complex emotions Catherine Malfitano responds to as if grasping at catnip. The fact that Marco (Richard Bernstein) and Rodolpho (Gregory Turay), the immigrant brothers who become the instruments of Eddie's death, have more interesting music than Eddie himself only further upsets the opera's center of balance, while niece Catherine (Isabel Bayrakdarian) remains an appealing but conventional operatic ingénue. Perhaps the score's most original stroke, a telling demonstration of how opera can add extra dimension to a spoken drama, is the commenting crowd of neighbors led by lawyer Alfieri (John Del Carlo), a device that underscores the play's kinship with Greek tragedy. On the whole, though, *A View From the Bridge* still strikes me as an honorable failure.

THE URGE TO TURN SCHUBERT'S **Winterreise** into a staged music drama is apparently irresistible, considering how many attempts have been made in recent years. Choreographer Trisha Brown is the latest to take up the challenge, and her version opened this season's "New Visions" series at Lincoln Center. Since the 24 songs that make up this bleak interior journey to despair and madness are more a collection of expressionistic snapshots than a linear narrative, Brown's abstract approach is perhaps the most viable one. The representational versions I've seen, with our jilted wanderer stalking the wintry countryside like some sort of lovelorn Frankenstein's monster, never seemed to work out.

The spare, ascetic, but always intensely lyrical nature of Schubert's songs is respected and genuinely enhanced in Brown's carefully thought-out visualization, one that makes its points almost entirely through gesture and body poses. The singer, British baritone Simon Keenlyside, interacts with three dancers, but he still remains the central figure. As the sole vocal presence onstage, he seems more isolated than ever in his poignant attempts to join the dance yet never quite fitting in, even though Keenlyside, a trimly athletic singer, can move with considerable grace.

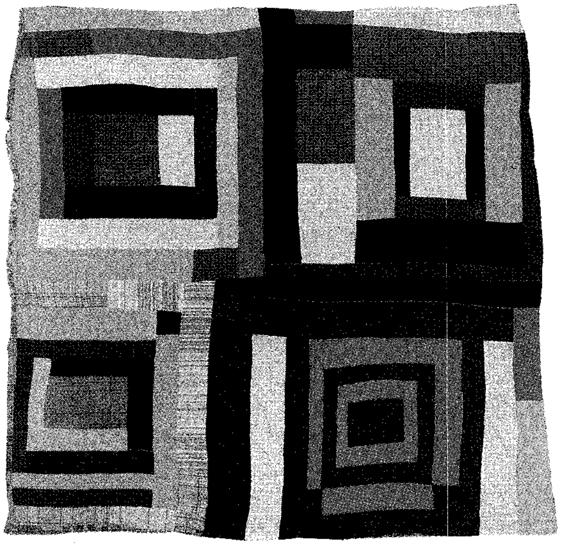
Brown has also picked up on many of the textual images in the songs, especially the notion of the singer's own shadow as his only companion. That idea reaches its climax in the last song as the ominous figure of the shadowy, deathlike hurdy-gurdy man literally obliterates the singer—just one of the many striking coups in Jennifer Tipton's poetic lighting design. Although Keenlyside needs to be as physically disciplined and involved as his colleagues, that in no way hampers his ability to sing these haunting songs with complete vocal control, a creamy legato, and a full range of expressive vocal colors. Add Pedja Muzijevic's elegant and supportive piano accompaniment, and this is a *Winterreise* that repays an attentive ear and a watchful eye. ■

Peter G. Davis's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/davis.

ART MARK STEVENS

Quilts of Personality

Jackson who? These strikingly beautiful quilts from an isolated Alabama town just might deserve a place among the great works of twentieth-century abstract art.



GEE-OMETRY: Gee's Bend, Alabama, resident Mary L. Bennett's *Housetop—Four-Block Variation* (circa 1965).

WHAT'S THE BEST ABSTRACT art ever made in America? A friend of mine enjoyed asking students this question, and when they predictably answered "Pollock," a look of disgust would flicker across his face and he'd mutter: "Naaaah . . . You forgot the Navajo women." Of course, it was unfair to compare apples and oranges—modernist paintings and Indian weavings—but the ploy invariably shook his students. Its effect did not depend simply upon the recognition that a great Navajo rug can be as visually powerful as a modernist painting. That's just Modernism 101. No, something deeper is at work whenever comparisons of this kind are made before a contemporary audience. **The Quilts of Gee's Bend**, which recently opened at the Whitney Museum of American Art, is a telling example of the phenomenon. Many of the quilts on view could almost be, if you squint, works of geometric abstraction by modern painters. But that alone cannot explain why the show is a hit, attracting a large crowd of New Yorkers.

Folded into a remote curve of the Alabama River not far from Selma, Gee's Bend was for generations an isolated hamlet. A paved road did not reach the town until 1967. Its people were tenant farmers, many of them the descendants of slaves from the local plantation. They raised hogs and chickens, lived in rough log cabins, plowed with mules, and picked cotton. The women of Gee's Bend made quilts from abandoned scraps of cloth, such as worn-out dungarees and cornmeal sacks. Their isolation allowed strong family quilting styles with names like Log Cabin and Housetop to develop over generations, without competition from the world beyond. Very occasionally, outsiders discovered and sometimes romanticized Gee's Bend as a town that time forgot—first in the thirties, when the town was depicted as a place untouched by the modern world, an "Alabama Africa," and then again during the civil-rights era. The current exhibit, which has been organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Tinwood Alliance, Atlanta, contains 60 quilts by 45 women from the town.

The quilts themselves are startlingly beautiful. They usually begin—but do not end—with a simple geometric pattern. There is no imprisoning symmetry. Like a jazz or blues singer teasing apart a melody, the artists play off their grids with unexpected riffs of color and form. The rippling of the cloth and the individuality of the sewing hand further animate the conceptual geometry. Again and again, the mind wonders, "Why'd she put that there? Why that strand of color below this bold shape?" However, the eye simply delights in the surprising rightness of such decisions. In their way, the artists of Gee's Bend are formalists, relying for expressive power not on illustrations but on the pure passions of the eye. "I never did like the book patterns some people had," says Annie Mae Young, one of the strongest artists in the show. "Those things had too many little bitty blocks. I like big pieces and long strips . . . I work it out, study the way to make it, get it to be right, kind of like working a puzzle. You find the colors and the shapes and certain fabrics that work out right."

The Quilts of Gee's Bend
At the Whitney Museum of American Art;
through 3/9/03.
See Art listings for details.

While relishing the formal bravura of these quilts, New Yorkers also respond to them in ways that would surprise the women of Gee's Bend—or, for that matter, Navajo weavers. This town with the fetching name arouses the usual modern longing for a lost community. The artists themselves are unsentimental about life in an impoverished rural village (as interviews in the catalogue attest) but possess family and spiritual resources New Yorkers often lack. They remind the knowledgeable of what everyone knows but also forgets—that creating significant art is not always the preserve of lonely genius or ambitious M.F.A.'s. For millennia, of course, women in traditional societies have worked with clay and cloth, making an earthy household art of closeness and enfolding warmth. Art rarely fulfills that function anymore. Art is for rich people. Art is something to visit in a museum. Art is for scratching your head. The women of Gee's Bend stitched together their pieces, integrating their art with their lives. Using worn-out dungarees in a quilt became a form of resurrection. ■

Mark Stevens's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/stevens.

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE PITKIN/PITKIN STUDIO.

Television | John Leonard

• **I Love the '80s** (DECEMBER 16 THROUGH 20; 9 to 11 P.M.; VH1) presumes that somebody must have, and so devotes an hour of pop-cultural detritus to each year of the greedhead decade. What's fun here are the juxtapositions. For 1984, for instance: Madonna, Prince, Bruce Springsteen, and *The Terminator*, plus Macintosh computers, *Miami Vice*, and *This Is Spinal Tap*.

• **The Main Stream** (DECEMBER 17; 9 TO 11 P.M.; Channel 13) sends humorist Roy Blount Jr. and documentarian Roger Weisberg down the Mississippi River, where they find redeeming eccentricity, radical environmentalism, and giant catfish, not to mention Garrison Keillor, Winona LaDuke, a voodoo priestess, an Elvis impersonator.

• **Second String** (DECEMBER 18; 8 TO 10 P.M.; TNT), in which Jon Voight as the stressed coach of the Buffalo Bills is forced to start Gil Bellows at quarterback in the pro-football playoffs because his entire starting team has food poisoning, surprises in one small way: Bellows is a better quarterback than he was a lawyer in *Ally McBeal* or a covert intelligence operative in *The Agency*. Voight, like all football coaches, is a surrogate father and surrogate God. Rest assured that in this TV movie there will be no abuse of either substances or spouses.

• **Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet** (December 18; 9 to 11 P.M.; Channel 13) moves at such a stately pace, from what happened 1,400 years ago in Mecca to how Muslims feel in America today, that we seem at times to be traveling by camel. But academics Karen Armstrong and M. Cherif Bassiouni are on hand to chat up the history, Andre Braugher tells us what we're looking at, and the architecture enthralls.

• **The Merry Widow** (DECEMBER 25; 9 TO 11:30 P.M.; Channel 13), with Wendy Wasserstein adapting and Yvonne Kenny starring in a San Francisco Opera production of the Franz Lehár war horse for *Great Performances*, suggests (pleasantly enough) that there's nothing new under the musical sun, certainly not Andrew Lloyd Webber.

• **Times Square: America's Town Square** (December 26; 10 to 11 P.M.; Travel Channel) talks to people like Ann Douglas and Bernadette Peters about this intersection of "art, sex, information, and commerce." A once-over-very-lightly with just a hint of mourning for the bygone seediness and an almost prurient ogle of what Disney wrought. ■

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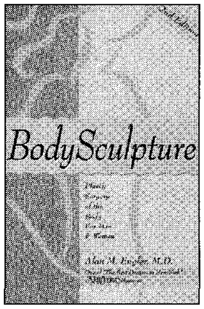

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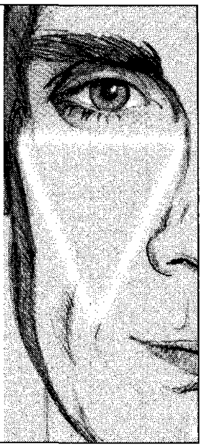

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POP MUSIC **ETHAN BROWN**

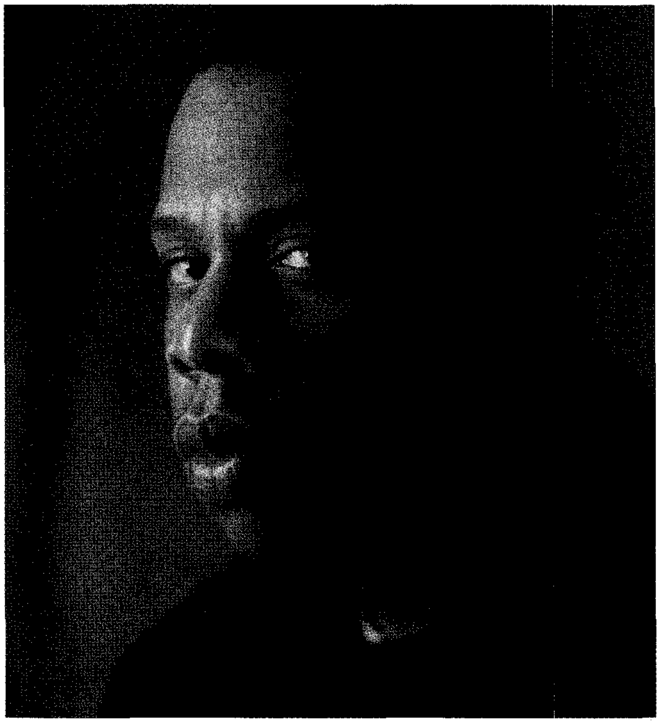
Soul on Nice

On new albums, Jay-Z's charismatic ease has degenerated into predictable, mush-mouthed rehashing, but Nas jabs with the best of them. And Mariah? Next question . . .

Jay-Z, The Blueprint 2: The Gift & the Curse (Roc-A-Fella/Island Def Jam)

UNLIKE OTHER RAPPERS, WHOSE furrowed brows and spiral notebooks crammed with lyrics signify their seriousness, Jay-Z's power lies in his unaffectedness. He often boasts that he improvises his work in the recording studio, and while the claim isn't verifiable, his music possesses an offhand, smart-alecky ease. But ever since Jay-Z knocked P. Diddy out of mainstream hip-hop supremacy with 1998's *Vol 2: Hard Knock Life*, this laid-back sensibility often slid into laziness. Great producers like the Neptunes, Kanye West, and Just Blaze masked Jay-Z's weaknesses, but last year his shortcomings were laid bare when he offered a shallow, tepid response to "Ether," Nas's savagely smart critique of the rapper.

It would be a nearly unprecedented example of self-revelation in hip-hop if the title of Jay-Z's seventh album, **The Blueprint 2: The Gift & the Curse** (a sequel to last year's *The Blueprint*), alluded to the talent behind the boards being weighed down by the man in front of the mike. It doesn't, of course (it's just more *Scarface-Godfather*-inspired pomposity), but as they did on *The Blueprint*, producer Kanye West and his engineer Gimel "Young Guru" Keaton provide Jay-Z with emotionally charged music stitched together with samples from soul's vulnerable, endlessly fertile "Hey Love" era in the seventies, leaving no doubt about who is the gift and who is the curse.



RAP AFTER P. DIDDY: Jay-Z became lazy after knocking Combs off the roost.

What a curse Jay-Z's ideas represent: Nearly everything about *The Blueprint 2* sounds like a retread, including its title; Dr. Dre's coming onboard to sequelize "The Watcher," a song from the *Chronic 2001* album; and the album's first single, "'03 Bonnie & Clyde"—an update of Jay-Z's own duet with Foxy Brown, "Bonnie & Clyde Part II," now featuring Destiny's Child's Beyoncé Knowles. (Even its patina of flamenco-guitar playing seems borrowed; Jay-Z used a strikingly similar sound for his collaboration with R. Kelly, "Fiesta.")

The Blueprint 2 represents a kind of Hollywood-ization of hip-hop: the enormous breadth of the double-CD package, with its bonus tracks and its endless guest stars. Ever since the conversion to CDs, however, albums have been long in running time yet short on ideas. This vapid *Blueprint* is as good an example as any.

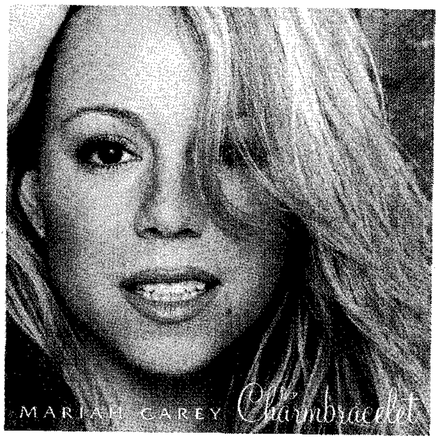
Nas, God's Son (Columbia)

FEW CAREERS—IN HIP-HOP OR elsewhere—have had as many false starts and misdirected moments as Queens rapper Nas's. After an impossibly virtuosic debut with *Illmatic*, which transformed street realism into lyrics so abstract they became a kind of psychedelic poetry, Nas took every wrong turn imaginable, hooking up with ludicrously derivative producers the Trackmasters and simply wasting his ample talents with songs either egomaniacally overblown (the chest-beating collaboration with P. Diddy "Hate Me Now") and embarrassingly market-minded (the *Sopranos*-inspired "Got Ur Self A . . . "). In between these downturns, admirers of Nas have nourished themselves on the aforementioned "Ether" and his surprisingly powerful few verses on the otherwise lame superstar cover of "What's Going On."

So it is thrilling, purifying, even in a down year like this, to witness Nas tap into the window-pane lucidity of his debut on his sixth album, **God's Son.** Here, Nas is so fierce, so plainspoken, so lean with words, that he demolishes not just the *oeuvre* of our ruling rappers (yes, including Eminem's) and recalls the music's lyrical champs like Rakim, he even brings to mind hip-hop progenitors like Muhammad Ali in the "Rumble in the Jungle" era.

Like an agile boxer, Nas throws sharp, surprising left hooks on the album's extraordinarily powerful first single, "Made You Look." "This ain't rappin', this is street hop," Nas warns—backed by a sparse, dusty-sounding drum loop that resembles the Incredible Bongo Band's oft-sampled "Apache"—"Now get off your ass like your seat's hot." Nas even takes an easy shot at hip-hop's pervasive materialism sting. "I'm six cribs deep, six bank accounts in six countries," Nas spits sarcastically. "Nah, I'm lyin' / who gives a fuck? / That's so tired."

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK W. OCKENFELS 3/CORBIS OUTLINE.



TINKER BELLE: Mariah Carey goes all New Agey.

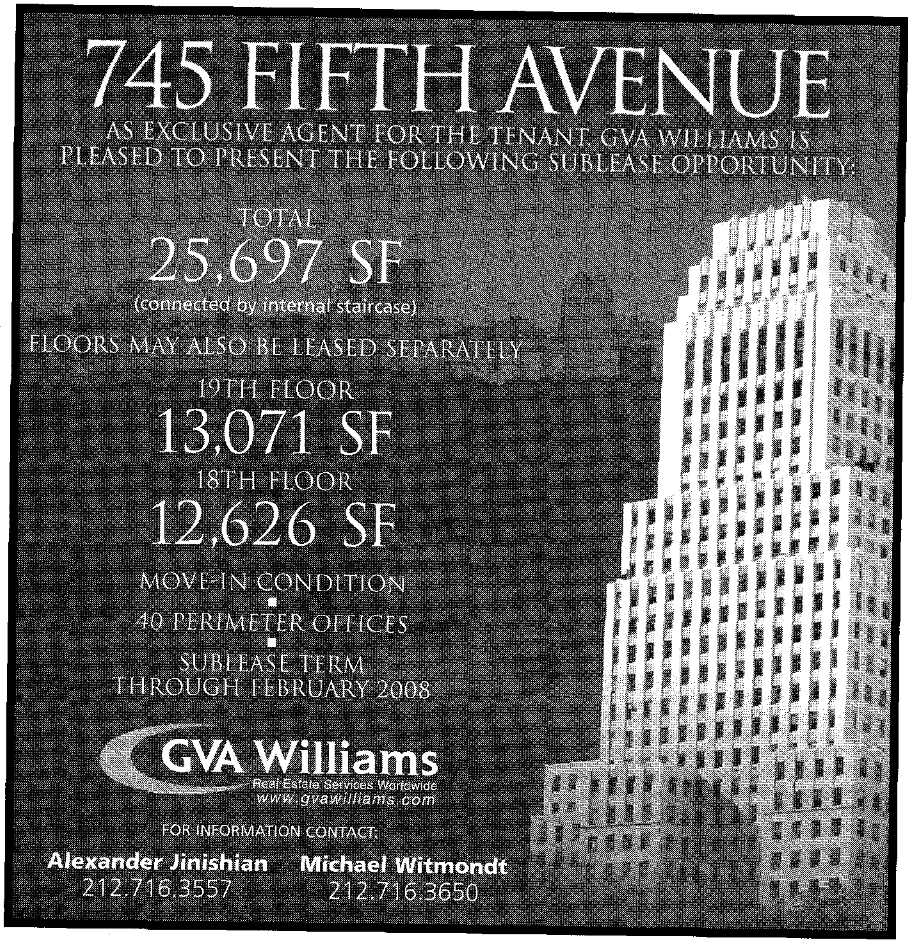
But the sharp jabs and insults of *God's Son* can't compete with the album's centerpiece, "Last Real Nigga Alive." The song is framed by a familiar conceit—the up-from-the-streets tale—but it's told in novelistic detail that few emcees would be able to summon. "It was my version of the blues," Nas raps of his *Illmatic* days, "crack epidemic had rap representing the rules." Nas doesn't back off from discussing his more third-rail-like recent moments, like the alleged beating of his manager at the hands of P. Diddy ("Puff soaked Interscope offices with champagne bottles on Steve"), and he drops Jay-Z with a single lyric aimed at his competitors' monied vanity. "I was Scarface," Nas deadpans, "and Jay was Manolo."

Like pathbreaking projects past, *God's Son* is not simply a great album, it's a reminder of what we've been missing. Where OutKast's *Stankonia* made connections between disparate musics in ways reminiscent of polymaths like Prince Paul, here Nas brings hip-hop back to the basics with a rough break-beat and a well-told story. This is the essence of punk; let's see if Nas's stripped-down rap starts a revolution.

Mariah Carey, Charmbracelet (Island Def Jam)

MARIAH CAREY'S CRIMES AGAINST ART ARE well-known and innumerable: She paved the way for the oversung and the underdressed, made hip-hoppers de rigueur for pop's aspirants to street cred, and created a tradition of ballads so bleached out that they make Lionel Richie's "Hello" seem like a paean to sadomasochism. All of these are on display on **Charmbracelet**, but what's particularly, notably bad here is its production, all whimsical chimes and tinkling keyboards. Was *Charmbracelet* recorded in a Casio shop? This instrument—and Mariah's—needs to be stopped. ■

Ethan Brown's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/music.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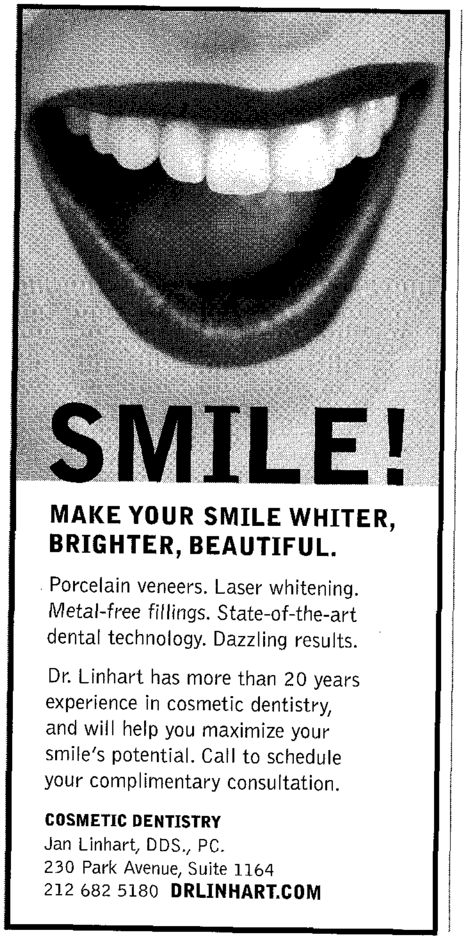
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HAL RUBENSTEIN

Happy Restraint

Charlie Palmer's new spot, Kitchen 22, may lack the elaborate artistry of Aureole, but with a well-crafted—and recessionproof—menu, consider it a holiday gift to yourself.

'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE Christmas, and all through the house, not a waistline had shrunken to fit a new blouse. Or at least, that's how it used to be. Way back when, the combination of self-indulgent corporate bashes with grande bouffe quantities of food and drink, a few annual overpriced pre-holiday group-hug dinners, and the arrival in town of at least one pair of relatives who wanted to take their favorite "still single" godchild out for a good meal, too often resulted in a New Year's resolution to lose the six pounds you'd given yourself for Christmas.

Well, this season could be a boon to your figure, if not to much else, since little of the above is likely to happen. In case you aren't an MTA worker, an AOL Time Warner stockholder, or in case you just hadn't noticed, the well of self-congratulatory benevolence has just about dried up. Not to quash anyone's prayers to Santa for a flat-screen TV, but wouldn't you rather fork over $25 for a DVD for the videophile on your list? With former spendthrifts spending thriftily, getting your stockings stuffed with unnecessary calories and self-loathing is pretty much left to you. Or you can capitalize on this leaner season by patronizing a restaurant celebrating the kind of portion control that may find you believing this *is* the most wonderful time of the year.

For a man of Charlie Palmer's skill, appetite, and ambition, **Kitchen 22** is no big deal, which may be why it succeeds as well as it does. While the more elaborate dishes at Aureole sometimes suffer from being as effortful as they are ingenious, the get-right-to-it clarity of his three-course dinner for $25 at 22 sets the tone for a meal that isn't once-in-a-lifetime but sure is a welcome no-sweat night out for once. With only five selections for each course, a ready staff aware that the menu's brief descriptions leave little to ponder, and a fresh, clean-edged dining room designed not to distract (except when the "happy hour" decibel and cigar levels prove less endearing), why waste time? Pick something.

22 PICKUP: Charlie Palmer's new restaurant, Kitchen 22.

Kitchen 22
36 East 22nd Street
(212-228-4399).

The menu, as executed by Palmer's chef de cuisine Scott Romano, is pretty much worryproof. No reason to hesitate delving into a salmon tartare nicely snapped by lemon crème fraîche and crackled by crisp salsify. Slices of weightlessly sweet beef carpaccio enjoy the tang of pickled vegetables. Lentil soup should adopt a gutsier base to harbor its pleasant Madeira reduction, but roasted-beet salad with walnuts and blue cheese or pepper-seared tuna are like acquaintances one is always glad to run into.

Though the menu changes every several weeks, it would be a shame for 22 to go too long this winter without offering its radiantly golden roast chicken. Spanish mackerel isn't what one would normally term a crowd pleaser, but then it's not normally prepared with a snappy tomato broth brightened by bits of chorizo and lemon essence. An almost candified fruit compote overwhelms a handsomely prepared pork loin, but keen balancing of a pale, licorice-scented fennel crust against an earthy port glaze complements roast salmon. A bowl of gemelli pasta with mushrooms, sun-dried tomatoes, Parmesan, and flashes of rosemary was the first entrée obliterated by my table.

Of five desserts, tirami sù is the only one unworthy of calorie compromise. Caramelized pineapples were swell, drenched in dark rum's glistening veneer. Chocolate decadence cake won't make chocoholics swoon yet, but with each visit it gets closer. Similarly, Key-lime pie acquires extra tang and more velvety consistency each time we meet. (Surely the next encounter should hook me completely.) And as unadorned as the hazelnut loaf is, its confident simplicity is what makes it such an uplifting choice.

No course at Kitchen 22 comes loaded like it's trying to steal customers from Peter Luger. Or Aureole, for that matter. Ah, but that's the beauty part of it. If it's bulk you're after for $25, there's always a trough of pasta at Carmine's with your name on it. For those smart enough to make Kitchen 22 a habit, here's not only a real bargain but the outside possibility that at this time next year, you too might come in a smaller portion. ■

Kitchen 22, Dinner, Monday through Saturday 5 to 10:30 P.M. Prix fixe, $25. All major credit cards.

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PHOTOGRAPHED BY KENNETH CHEN.

spring education

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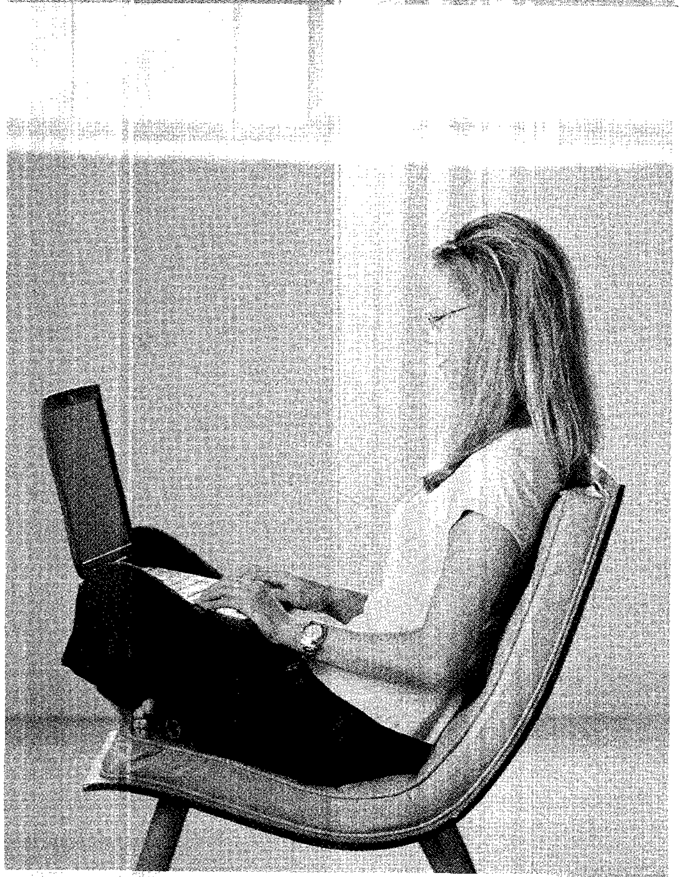
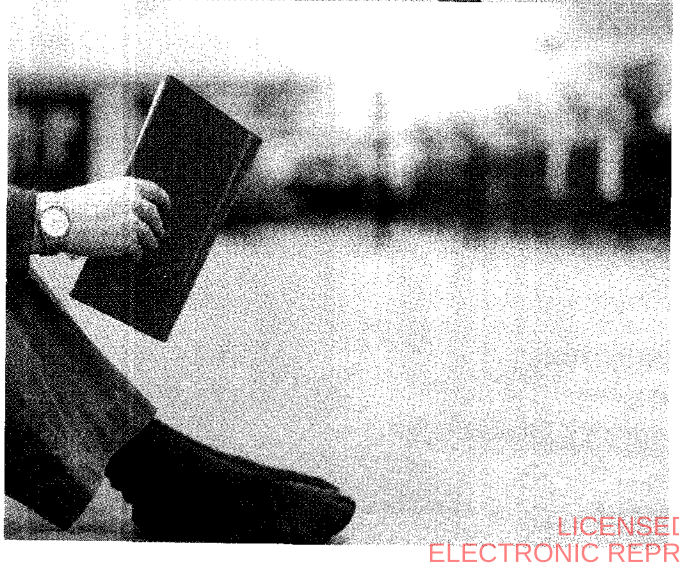
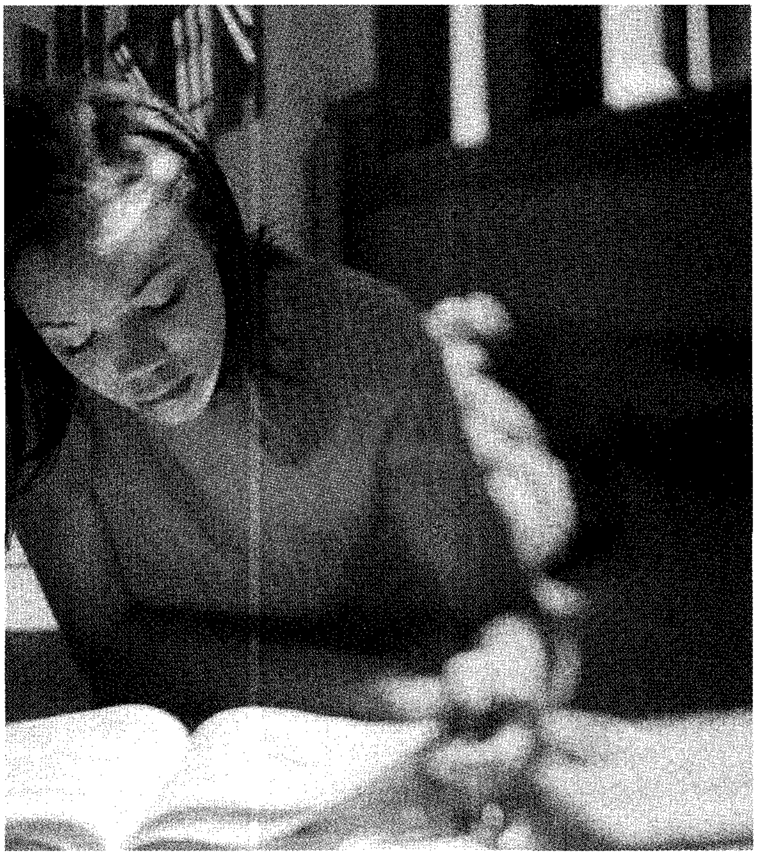


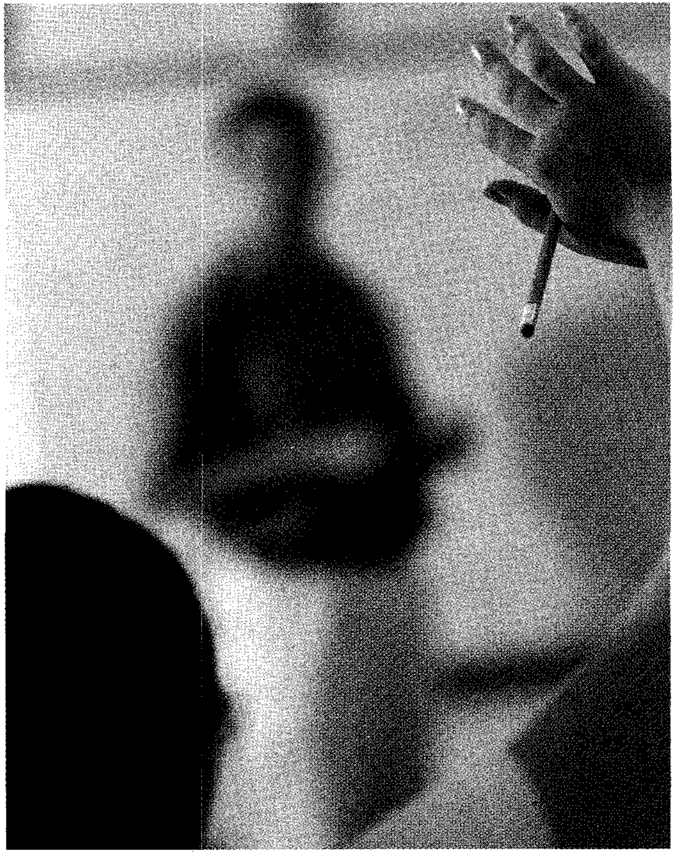


DOWNTOWN DIVERSITY

Since it was founded in 1934, more than two million students have taken classes at **New York University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies**. SCPS offers more than 2,000 courses, 100 professional certificates and diplomas, 11 master's degrees and 20 undergraduate programs to more than 55,000 students each year.

In addition to locations at NYU's Greenwich Village campus and its two Midtown locations, last October, SCPS expanded south to the Woolworth building. The satellite center now occupies three sprawling floors in Lower Manhattan—enough room for 40 new classrooms,





ample conference space and four computer labs. Courses at the new downtown campus run the gamut from NYU's new Construction Management master's degree program to graphic design and lunchtime language tune-ups, along with offerings in digital communications and media, real estate, health care and information systems management.

Liberal arts courses at the Woolworth building worth checking out include "Basic Drawing For Beginners," "Photographing New York After Sept. 11," and "Masters of Downtown Architecture" as well as courses in playwriting, modern jazz and video game design. SCPS also offers a range of career change and self-help courses.

SCPS will host an open house at the Regent Wall Street Hotel (55 Wall St., in the ballroom) on Jan. 7, 2003 from 6 to 9 p.m. Or, pick up a copy of the spring 2003 catalog, a collectible featuring the cover design of legendary caricaturist Al Hirschfeld.

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The Dean's Forum is a series of lectures and discussions led by well-known experts on a variety of controversial topics. Timely courses to know about include: "Cuban Culture In and Out of Cuba," "Public Art in America Today," "Women in Islam" and "Urban Life: Insights Across Disciplines." Classes such as "Modern Architecture from Bogardus to Bilbao," "Silk Sheets: Writing Erotica" and "The Best of Italian Cooking" will appeal to your aesthetic side.

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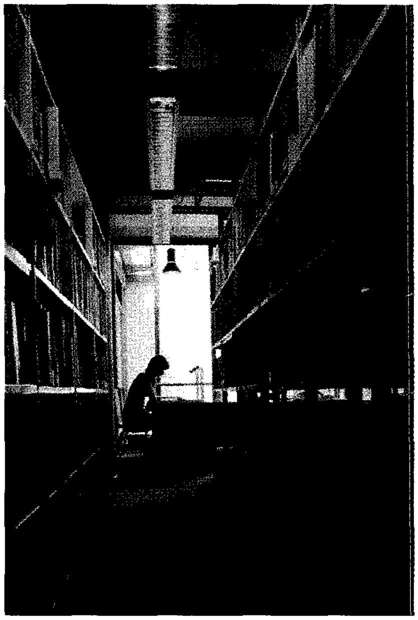

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The winter session begins Jan. 2 and the spring semester begins Feb. 3. An advisement session will be held Jan. 27, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., in the C building lobby of the Marvin Feldmand Center on West 27th Street and Seventh Avenue.

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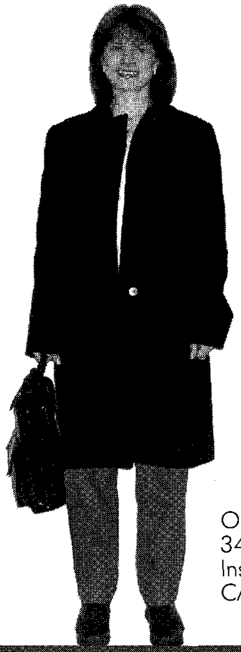

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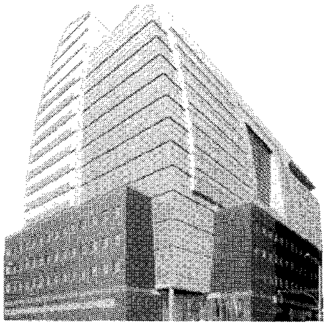

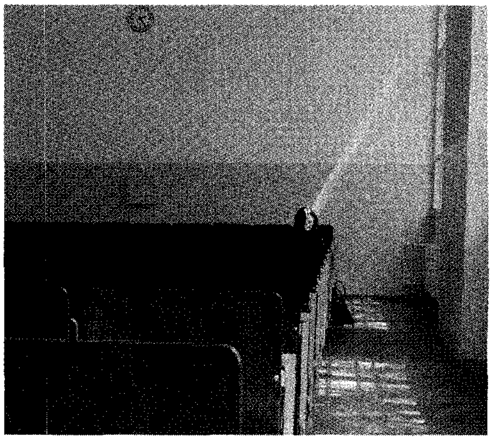

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About 40 percent of GWW's students take advantage of online classes at www.WritingClasses.com, which Forbes Magazine recently included in its "Best of the Web." New to the online roster are "How To Get Published" and "How To Sell Your Screenplay." Ten-week or three-hour private instruction is also available either online or in person. Or, writers can have a piece analyzed by a member of GWW's teaching staff. Winter classes begin Jan. 13.

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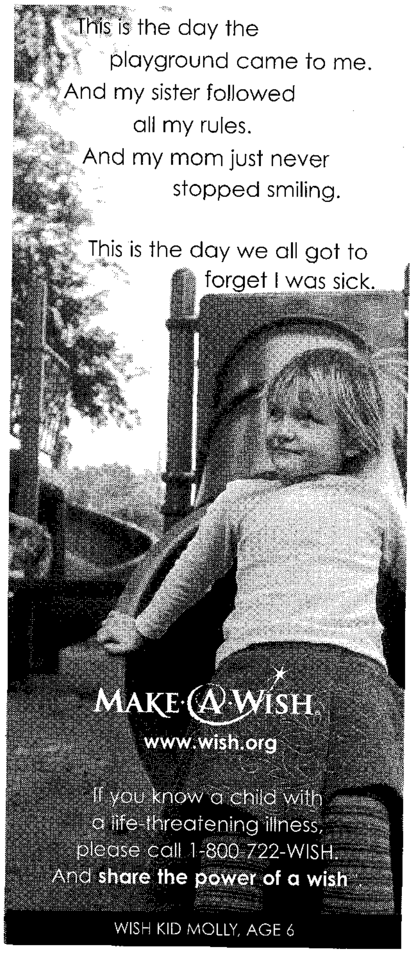
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playground came to me.
And my sister followed
all my rules.
And my mom just never
stopped smiling.

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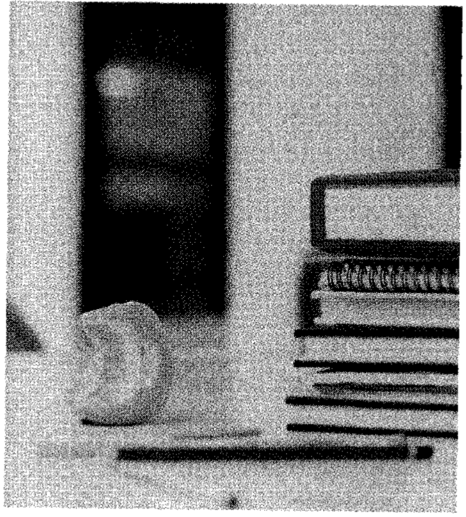

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or well-known architectural historia
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theory, practice and manual-skills cou
es will be introduced, including a nu
ber of intensive seminars that in the p
have covered such topics as decorat
plaster work, fine metalwork a
Neoclassical French interiors.

In addition to the schedule of we
end and evening courses, several n
drawing programs are slated to take p
ticipants to Paris and Rome. Scotla
will be the site for a tour of country ho
es, for which the institute again will c
laborate with Sotheby's Institute of A
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Movies

Edited by Ben Kaplan

NEW THIS WEEK

Antwone Fisher
The title character (Derek Luke), a young sailor with a violent temper, delves into his abuse-laden past with the help of a fatherly Navy psychiatrist (Denzel Washington, who also directed). Film starts off with a talky, dramatically flaccid first half, but picks up with an emotionally overpowering finale as Fisher, who wrote the script, searches for his origins. (See chart.) (1 hr. 57 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 12/19.

Catch Me If You Can
See Rainer, page 106. (2 hrs. 20 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 12/25.

Chicago
Film version of hit Broadway musical about Depression-era murderess and wannabe-showgirl Roxie Hart (Renée Zellweger), the dancer she idolizes (Catherine Zeta-Jones), and the lawyer (Richard Gere) who tries to save them both. Wall-to-wall brilliantly choreographed musical set pieces will leave many an audience in rapture, but allow little room for plot, intimacy, or character development. Directed by Rob Marshall. (See box.) (1 hr. 48 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 12/27.

Devils on the Doorstep
A peasant (director Jiang Wen) in Japanese-occupied China is secretly given two prisoners of war to conceal. As the months pass, the village and the mysterious captives come to understand one another, with alternately surreal and tragic consequences. Harrowing look at the madness of war (which ran into trouble with Chinese censors) is shot with a stark, spellbinding immediacy. In Mandarin and Japanese, with English subtitles. (2 hrs. 20 mins.; NR) • Opens 12/28.

Gangs of New York
See Rainer, page 106. (2 hrs. 45 mins.; R) • Opens 12/20.

The Hours
Stephen Daldry's film of Michael Cunningham's novel, about Virginia Woolf and her impact on three different eras, stars Meryl Streep, Nicole Kidman, and Julianne Moore. (1 hr. 50 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 12/27.

Max
Fascinating, fictionalized look at the relationship between a Jewish art dealer (John Cusack) and struggling artist Adolf Hitler (Noah Taylor) in the chaotic years following World War I. Cusack's considerable charisma is in fine form, but the day belongs to Taylor's energetic portrait of the confused, wild-eyed Hitler, struggling between his love for art and his uneasy drift into politics. (1 hr. 48 mins.; R) • Opens 12/27.

Morvern Callar
Ratcatcher director Lynne Ramsay's film (from Alan Warner's novel) about a malcontent (Samantha Morton) who claims her dead boyfriend's novel as her own. (1 hr. 37 mins.; NR) • Opens 12/20.

Narc
Impressively grim, over-the-top drama has former undercover cop Jason Patric investigating the grisly death of a fellow officer, accompanied by a monstrously temperamental investigator (Ray Liotta) whose suspicious actions complicate the situation. Predictable police-corruption plotline is redeemed in part by director Joe Carnahan's moody stylization, but the results are still too conventional. (1 hr. 47 mins.; R) • Opens 12/20.

Nicholas Nickleby
Douglas McGrath compresses the Dickens classic about a youth (Charlie Hunnam) whose devastated family has to rely on the generosity of his coldhearted uncle (Christopher Plummer) to survive. The master's elaborate, compelling plot remains robust, with a terrific supporting cast (especially Jim Broadbent as the monstrous Mr. Squeers), but Hunnam lacks the presence to hold it all together convincingly. (2 hrs. 6 mins.; PG) • Opens 12/27.

The Pianist
A Jewish pianist (Adrien Brody) tries to survive in devastated, Nazi-occupied Warsaw in real-life refugee Roman Polanski's startling re-creation of Holocaust-era Poland. Brody's performance, and the level of detail Polanski brings to his bare-bones story, create a palpable sense of exhaustion and despair. A uniquely compelling portrait of this time that pulls no punches. (See box.) (2 hrs. 28 mins.; R) • Opens 12/27.

LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS: Ray Liotta and Jason Patric in *Narc*.

Pinocchio
Roberto Benigni, of *Life Is Beautiful* fame, directs and stars in this version of the famous Italian fairy tale about the puppet who becomes a boy. (1 hr. 48 mins.; G) • Opens 12/25.

Smokers Only
Depressive wannabe singer Reni (Cecilia Bengolea) and listless street hustler Andres (Leonardo Brzezicki) meet up, hook up, and wander the streets. Elliptical Argentine flick about youthful boredom is meandering and self-indulgent but features some nice, gritty imagery along the way. (1 hr. 24 mins.; NR) • Opens 12/20.

Sonny
A former male prostitute (James Franco) returns home to New Orleans determined to break with his former life, but his shrewish mom (Brenda Blethyn), who's also a madam, makes that difficult. Nicolas Cage's directorial debut is a bizarre, almost campy mix of the melodramatic and the absurd. Undeniably interesting but also strangely inaccessible. (See chart.) (1 hr. 45 mins.; R) • Opens 12/27.

25th Hour
See Rainer, page 106. (2 hrs. 14 mins.; R) • Opens 12/19.

Two Weeks Notice
Crusading activist lawyer Sandra Bullock goes to work for philandering, vapid developer Hugh Grant, and the two run circles around each another while slowly realizing they're in love. Wafer-thin romantic comedy doesn't have a surprising bone in its body but benefits from Grant's innocuously slimy charm, some occasionally witty dialogue, and nice New York views. (1 hr. 40 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 12/20.

The Wild Thornberrys Movie
Animated Nickelodeon spin-off about a 12-year-old girl who can speak with the animals and faces off against elephant poachers in Africa. Directed by Jeff McGrath; voices include Rupert Everett and Marisa Tomei. (1 hr. 19 mins.; PG) • Opens 12/20.

REVIEWS BY BILGE EBIRI

Now Playing

About Schmidt
Jack Nicholson gives a tricky, tamped-down performance as a retired actuary from Omaha who becomes a widower and drives his Winnebago to Denver in an attempt to squelch his daughter's wedding to a nincompoop. The film has its moderate amusements, but director Alexander Payne is more interested in scoring points off his people than in delving into their psyches. Hope Davis, Dermot Mulroney and Kathy Bates provide good supporting work. (Rainer; 11/25/02) (2 hrs. 5 mins.; R) • 10; 40.

Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights
Adam Sandler gets animated, as a drunken lout. A virtual encyclopedia of cheap sentiment and crude humor, with none of Sandler's live-action gifts. (1 hr. 11 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 16; 33; 41; 42; 48; 50; 54; 57; 59; 60; 66; 68; 69; 70; 71; 73.

★ Adaptation
Director Spike Jonze and screenwriter Charlie Kaufman, who made *Being John Malkovich*, collaborate again in this wildly original comedy starring Nicolas Cage in a dual role as Charlie Kaufman, a sorry-faced screenwriter trying to adapt Susan Orlean's nonfiction book *The Orchid Thief*, and his crass brother Donald, who decides he wants to be a screenwriter, too. Meryl Streep plays Orlean, Chris Cooper is the eponymous orchid poacher. All are in top form. (Rainer; 12/2/02) (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) • 6; 16; 40.

Analyze That
In this sequel to *Analyze This*, Robert De Niro gets released from prison into the supervision of his psychiatrist Billy Crystal. Familiar story recycles jokes from the original, but manages a sense of humor when it's not being cloying. (1 hr. 35 mins.; R) • 1; 7; 13; 14; 15; 16; 26; 33; 35; 40; 42; 43; 47; 48; 49; 50; 51; 54; 55; 57; 59; 60; 62; 65; 66; 69; 70; 71; 72; 73.

Ararat
Ambitious portrait of the Armenian genocide is less about history than its present-day resonance throughout the Armenian diaspora. Often fascinating, but a less aloof style might have more emotional impact. Co-starring Charles Aznavour; directed by Atom Egoyan. (1 hr. 55 mins.; R) • 2.

Blackboards
Oddly hypnotic, fairy-tale-like story of teachers wandering around Iranian Kurdistan with blackboards on their back. Very symbolic, elliptical film will try some viewers, but there's no mistaking its originality. Directed by Samira Makhmalbaf. (1 hr. 25 mins.; NR) • 9.

★ El Bola
A troubled boy (Juan José Ballesta) from an abusive family befriends the new kid in school (Pablo Galán), whose kindhearted folks provide an alternative to his misery. Episodic, surprisingly unsentimental look at friendship and family, but the real highlights are the stunning performances from its two young leads. (1

Ground Rules These synopses, where noted, are condensed versions of reviews by Peter Rainer. Stars (★) denote releases that *New York* recommends, ranging from best-of-the-year picks to worthy curios to flawed movies with one outstanding element. **NOTE: Each review is followed by numbers indicating theaters where the film is playing; a key to theaters begins on page 130.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL COURTNEY.

hr. 28 mins.; NR) • 8.

★ Bowling for Columbine
Michael Moore explores the culture of guns in America. It's a film that needs to be seen. (2 hrs. 5 mins.; R) • 6; 13; 16; 17; 37; 44.

★ Comedian
The film is a fascinating chronicle of how comics do their thing. (Rainer; 10/21/02) (1 hr. 19 mins.; NR) • 9; 19; 24.

Die Another Day
Pierce Brosnan in another tour of duty as 007; and, in a nod to Ursula Andress in *Dr. No*, Halle Berry in a bikini. (Rainer; 11/25/02) (2 hrs. 3 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 10; 12; 14; 15; 22; 23; 28; 30; 35; 38; 39; 41; 42; 43; 47; 48; 50; 51; 52; 54; 55; 57; 59; 60; 62; 67; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72; 73.

Drumline
Freshman drummer Devon (Nick Cannon) finds himself at odds with the extremely competitive world of southern-college marching bands. Surprisingly well-acted film's central conceit may seem odd (*An Officer and a Gentleman* meets *Bring It On*), but it's quite engrossing. (1 hr. 59 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 3; 12; 14; 16; 26; 28; 39; 43; 46; 50; 52; 53; 58; 59; 60; 67; 68; 73.

★ 8 Mile
Curtis Hanson's movie starring Eminem is geared up to be an anthem for making the right choices, but luckily its real subject is the euphoria that talent can bring. At its best, the film is one of the year's sweetest joyrides. (Rainer; 11/4/02) (1 hr. 51 mins.; R) • 1; 10; 15; 22; 28; 41; 43; 48; 50; 54; 57; 59; 60; 68; 71; 73.

El Crimen del Padre Amaro
A priest (Gael García Bernal) has to face his passionate love for a girl (Ana Claudia Talancón) while also contending with the corruption he sees among his fellow priests. The film suffers from ridiculous plotting, despite some fine performances. (2 hrs.; R) • 2; 16; 18; 61; 63.

The Emperor's Club
Kevin Kline plays a classics teacher who finds his charms powerless against a senator's son. Kline does his best in a film with unfortunate resemblances to *Dead Poets Society.* (1 hr. 45 mins.; PG-13) • 7; 15; 16; 27; 56; 71.

Empire
A drug lord (John Leguizamo) tries to go legit after discovering the joys of making money on Wall Street. Leguizamo's performance is convincing at times, but he's hampered by a rote script full of second-rate gangster-movie posturing. (1 hr. 38 mins.; R) • 1; 3; 14; 16; 17; 30; 38; 39; 42; 43; 48; 50; 53; 54; 58; 59; 60; 64; 68; 71; 73.

Equilibrium
In a future world where all feeling is banned, a top enforcer (Christian Bale) becomes public enemy No. 1. Dystopian sci-fi borrows freely from *1984*, *Logan's Run*, *The Matrix*, and everything in between, with diminishing returns. (1 hr. 47 mins.; R) • 3; 14; 15; 19; 22; 40; 43; 50; 56; 59.

Evelyn
Pierce Brosnan stars in this true story of a father who challenged the Irish Supreme Court for custody of his three kids in 1953. Co-starring Stephen Rea and Julianna Margulies; directed by Bruce (*Driving Miss Daisy*) Beresford. (1 hr. 34 mins.; PG) • 10; 16; 40.

Extreme Ops
Devon Sawa and Bridgette Wilson-Sampras are daredevil skiers who confront a Serbian terrorist after their film crew captures him on tape. Directed by Christian Duguay. (1 hr. 33 mins.; PG-13) • 16; 60; 66; 71.

★ Far From Heaven
Todd Haynes's movie is set in mid-fifties suburbia and stars Julianne Moore as a dutiful matron and Dennis Quaid as her sales-executive husband. Quaid's performance as a man incinerated with self-loathing is very strong, and Moore does a commendable job as the sacrificial caregiver—the woman left behind by her times. (Rainer; 11/4/02) (1 hr. 50 mins.; PG-13) • 2; 11; 29; 32; 37; 44; 47; 61.

Frida
Salma Hayek stars as the famous unibrowed Mexican artist who was married to Diego Rivera, played here by Alfred Molina. Hayek is a bundle of energy, but her torridness has few emotional levels. Directed by Julie Taymor. (Rainer; 10/28/02) (2 hrs. 2 mins.; R) • 1; 2; 13; 15; 16; 26; 31; 40; 45.

Friday After Next
Third film in the *Friday* series has Craig (Ice Cube) and Day-Day (Mike Epps) back in the 'hood. Plotless comedy can't hold a candle to the original *Friday*. (1 hr. 27 mins.; R) • 16; 39; 42; 43; 48; 50; 54; 57; 59; 60; 68; 71.

God Is Great, I'm Not
A model (Audrey Tautou) searching for meaning hooks up with a self-hating Jewish veterinarian (Edouard Baer) and becomes obsessed with his religion. Lighthearted, Woody Allen–esque romance. In French, with English subtitles. (1 hr. 35 mins.; NR) • 19.

Half Past Dead
Turgid mess of an action flick is sloppy and silly, even by seal-shaped Steven Seagal's low, low standards. (1 hr. 39 mins.; PG-13) • 24.

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
The next *Harry Potter* movie is marginally better than the first outing—it's speedier and darker. But Chris Columbus, directing once again, is too unimaginative to bring out the entrancements in Rowling's material. (Rainer; 11/11/02) (2 hrs. 40 mins.; PG) • 1; 10; 11; 14; 15; 17; 22; 30; 36; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43; 45; 47; 48; 50; 51; 54; 55; 57; 59; 60; 62; 66; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72; 73.

The Hot Chick
Rob Schneider plays a dude who inhabits the body of a good-looking girl who once dissed him. (1 hr. 41 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 10; 11; 14; 15; 16; 26; 28; 39; 40; 43; 49; 51; 53; 60; 66; 69; 70; 73.

Intacto
Labyrinthine Spanish thriller has a group of risk-takers competing to see who gets to gamble in a desert casino. Elaborate, diffuse plot is initially hard to follow, but picks up for a surprisingly powerful finale. In Spanish, with English subtitles. (1 hr. 48 mins.; R) • 8.

The Jimmy Show
A frustrated dreamer (Frank Whaley, who also wrote and directed) copes with his dead-end existence while trying to become a comic. Whaley hits an impressive range of emotions, but the film so wallows in despair that it's hard to take seriously. Co-starring Ethan Hawke. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) • 4.

★ The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers
See Rainer, page 106. (2 hrs. 59 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 10; 11; 33; 35; 50; 54; 57; 60; 67; 68; 69; 72; 73.

Maid in Manhattan
Romantic comedy starring Jennifer Lopez as a chambermaid mistaken for a socialite by an aspiring senator (Ralph Fiennes). Directed by Wayne Wang. (1 hr. 42 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 10; 11; 14; 15; 22; 28; 30; 38; 39; 41; 42; 43; 46; 47; 48; 50; 53; 55; 57; 59; 60; 62; 64; 66; 68; 69; 70; 72; 73.

Massoud, the Afghan
Documentarian Christophe de Ponfilly followed the late Afghan resistance hero Ahmad Shah Massoud as he fought both the Soviets and the Taliban. But de Ponfilly's footage seems too abbreviated (and doting) to give much insight into Massoud. (1 hr. 30 mins.; NR) • 5.

Mostly Martha
An obsessive chef (Martina Gedeck) finds her life unraveling when her niece moves in and an Italian takes over her restaurant's kitchen. Gains charm thanks to Gedeck's performance. (1 hr. 47 mins.; PG) • 9.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding
Innocuous comedy about the thirtysomething Toula, who is getting too old to marry, at least by her Greek family's standards. When a decidedly un-Greek Mr. Right (John Corbett) enters her life, things get even worse. (1 hr. 59 mins.; PG) • 3; 16; 61; 69.

Now You Know
Veteran Kevin Smith actor Jeff Anderson wrote and directed this comedy about a fiancée (Rashida Jones) who cancels her wedding as the groom's bachelor party is about to begin. (1 hr. 42 mins.; R) • 31.

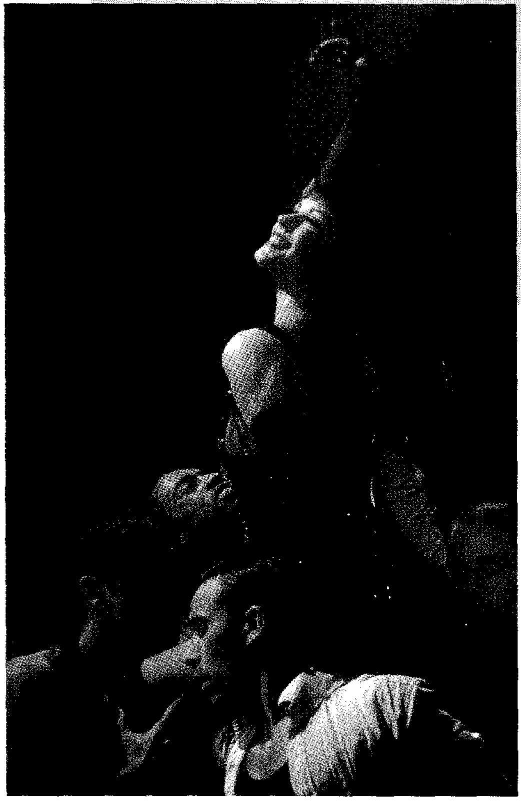
★ Personal Velocity
An abused wife (Kyra Sedgwick) leaves her husband; an ambitious editor (Parker Posey) contends with an extramarital affair; a troubled girl (Fairuza Balk) helps a mysterious runaway. The immediacy of director Rebecca Miller's visual style and the lovely performances make this worth watching. (1 hr. 26 mins.; R) • 2; 28; 44.

Backstory

Chicago Hope

"I've worked with so many people on this who are no longer here," says producer Marty Richards about **Chicago**. No wonder: It's taken decades to make a movie of Bob Fosse's 1975 Broadway smash about murderous molls, jazz, and the fleetingness of fame. After the original stage production in 1975 was well received, Fosse drummed up some studio interest, but the project went on hold when he died in 1987. (It might have been for the best: He'd planned to cast Madonna as Roxie Hart.) Later, when Miramax approached *Cabaret* co-director Rob Marshall about filming another hot Broadway property, *Rent*, Marshall suggested *Chicago* instead. Richards sealed the deal by casting Catherine Zeta-Jones after she'd floored him singing carols at a Christmas party. Opens December 27.

JAZZ ODYSSEY: *Chicago*, thanks to Catherine Zeta-Jones, leaps from the stage to the screen.



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID JAMES.

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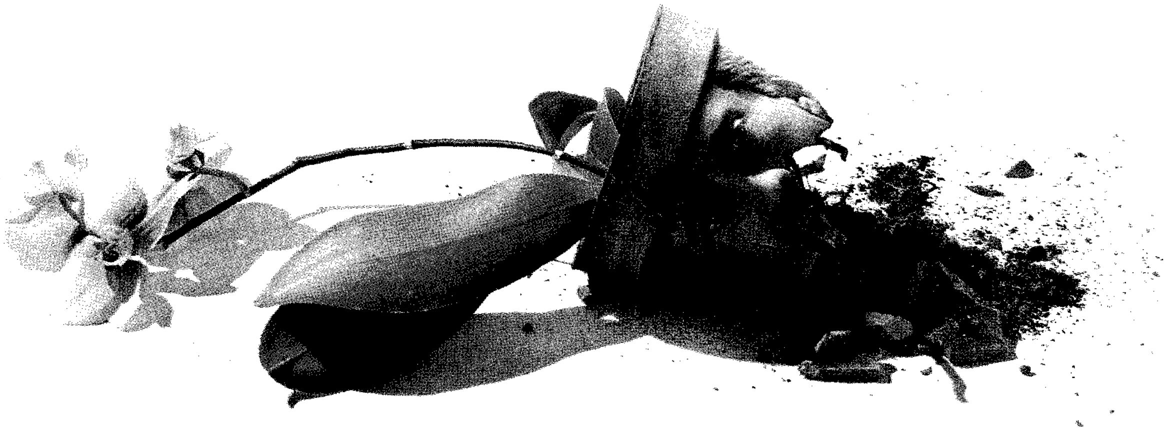

Nicolas Cage **Meryl Streep** **Chris Cooper**

Directed by Spike Jonze
Screenplay by Charlie Kaufman and Donald Kaufman

Adaptation.

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Power and Terror: Noam Chomsky in Our Times
Talky documentary follows leftist icon Chomsky as he discusses the terrorism of the powerful in a post-9/11 world. For converts only. (1 hr. 14 mins.; NR) • 5.

★ Rabbit-Proof Fence
Three Aborigine girls, whisked away by the Australian government to be trained as housekeepers, escape from internment and flee across the desert. Surprisingly poetic film avoids hysterics and presents an otherworldly portrait of determination in a haunting landscape. Directed by Phillip Noyce. (1 hr. 35 mins.; PG) • 6; 25.

Real Women Have Curves
A young Hispanic girl (America Ferrera) goes to work with her bickering but loving mom (Lupe Ontiveros) in a garment factory. Film tackles ethnicity, weight, and self-esteem issues with no subtlety, but Ferrera and Ontiveros are still a joy to watch. (1 hr. 25 mins.; PG-13) • 4; 37; 61; 63.

The Ring
Naomi Watts stars in Gore Verbinski's remake of a Japanese horror film about a haunted videotape; its viewers wind up dead after seeing the film. (1 hr. 55 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 22; 41; 42; 43; 50; 51; 54; 57; 59; 60; 67; 68; 71; 73.

★ Roger Dodger
Writer-director Dylan Kidd's fascinating, uneven debut is about a cynical adman, played furiously well by Campbell Scott, who spends a long night's journey into day teaching his young nephew about the opposite sex. (Rainer; 10/28/02) (1 hr. 45 mins.; R) • 4; 61.

★ Russian Ark
Alexander Sokurov's movie utilized new camera technology in order to shoot the entire film in a single take. Gliding through the stages of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, it's a visually astonishing, dramatically stilted meditation on history. In Russian, with English subtitles. (Rainer; 12/9/02) (1 hr. 36 mins.; NR) • 37.

The Santa Clause 2
Sequel to 1994 family hit has Tim Allen, established as Santa Claus, leaving the North Pole to look for a wife. Convoluted storyline feels like 60 people helped write it. (1 hr. 45 mins.; G) • 16; 41; 43; 55; 57; 59; 71; 73.

Secretary
James Spader and Maggie Gyllenhaal star in this naughty trifle with Buñuelian pretensions. (Rainer; 9/23/02) (1 hr. 51 mins.; R) • 3.

Shanghai Ghetto
Documentary about the plight of European Jews who fled Nazism and made their way to Shanghai. Inherently engaging topic is given the standard talking-heads treatment, resulting in an informative and worthwhile, if visually uninteresting, film. (1 hr. 40 mins.; NR) • 63.

Solaris
George Clooney plays Chris Kelvin, a psychologist sent into outer space to investigate a ship that has lost contact with Earth. Remake of Andrei Tarkovsky classic. Directed by Steven Soderbergh. (1 hr. 35 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 10; 11; 15; 16; 21; 28; 34; 36; 41; 51; 54; 63; 65; 69; 71.

★ Standing in the Shadows of Motown
Valuable but uneven look at the unsung, underpaid session musicians, known as the Funk Brothers, who played on the Motown hits. (1 hr. 42 mins.; PG) • 3.

Star Trek Nemesis
Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) finds himself facing off against a younger, deadly clone of himself (Tom Hardy). Rote Star Trek adventure is full of familiar faces, and has just enough undistinguished action set-pieces to pass the time. For fans only. (1 hr. 57 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 7; 13; 14; 15; 22; 28; 30; 38; 39; 41; 42; 43; 45; 46; 48; 49; 50; 51; 53; 55; 56; 57; 58; 59; 60; 62; 64; 66; 70; 72; 73.

★ Talk to Her
Pedro Almodóvar's movie affects some people very deeply, while others, like myself, find it high-grade kitsch. It's about two men, well played by Javier Camara and Dario Grandinetti, who each tend to their respective women who lie irreversibly comatose in a clinic. The women, elicit feelings of tenderness from the men. (Rainer; 11/25/02) (1 hr. 56 mins.; R) • 6; 11; 37.

Treasure Planet
Futuristic tale of an unlucky young adventurer seeking a legendary stash of loot. Visually stunning film seems at times like an overearnest, expensive *Futurama* episode. (1 hr. 36 mins.; PG) • 1; 3; 16; 19; 30; 40; 41; 42; 43; 47; 50; 51; 54; 55; 56; 57; 59; 60; 62; 66; 70; 71; 73.

★ The Trials of Henry Kissinger
Powerfully muckraking. (Rainer; 9/23/02) (2 hrs. 7 mins.; NR) • 5.

★ The Way Home
A boy goes to live with his mute grandmother in her remote shack. It's a classic setup for sentimentality, and, sure enough, it works: Director Lee Jung-hyang expertly (and shamelessly) jerks every possible tear out of her viewers' ducts. (1 hr. 25 mins.; PG) • 8; 61.

Wes Craven Presents: They
Director Robert (*The Hitcher*) Harmon's scary movie about a haunted graduate student who discovers that bad dreams do come true. (1 hr. 30 mins.; PG-13) • 10; 14; 22; 41; 43; 48; 50; 51; 54; 58; 59; 70; 71; 73.

Premieres

What I Really Want to Do Is . . .

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS: Denzel on the set of *Antwone Fisher*.

Blame it on Redford (*Ordinary People*) and Costner (*Dances With Wolves*): Every star with the mojo to open a film wide, as they say in the business, is getting *behind* the camera. "I wanted to be re-stimulated," says **Nicolas Cage**, explaining why he, like **George Clooney** and **Denzel Washington**, makes his directorial debut this month. Each actor guides a newcomer in a role custom-made for his younger self—in fact, Cage was originally cast to play his film's lead. And all three draw heavily from real life. (See "New This Week.")

The Film	The Story	The Backstory
Antwone Fisher Opens December 19	Denzel's melodrama about an angry Navy man (Derek Luke) who confronts his abusive childhood and searches for Mom.	The real-life Antwone, a guard at Sony studios, wrote the script; Derek Luke, who worked in the gift shop, plays the title role.
Confessions of a Dangerous Mind Opens December 31	Clooney's spy story about *Gong Show* creator Chuck Barris (Sam Rockwell), who claims to have whacked people for the CIA.	Screenplay by Charlie (*Adaptation*) Kaufman, again mixing real life with fiction (though Barris claims it's all true).
Sonny Opens December 27	Nic Cage's coming-of-age tale of a New Orleans mother who pimps for her want-ing-to-leave-the-life son (James Franco).	Cage, coming off the monumental buzz surrounding *Adaptation*, says Kaufman "inspired me to not be afraid to fall on my face."

Manhattan

Below 14th Street

1. Battery Park City Cinema
102 North End Ave. (212-945-3418) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Drumline; 8 Mile; Empire; Frida; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring; Solaris; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet

2. CC Angelika Film Center
18 W. Houston St. (212-995-2000) • Ararat; El Crimen del Padre Amaro; Far From Heaven; Frida; Personal Velocity

3. CC Village East
189 Second Ave. (212-529-6799) • Drumline; Empire; Equilibrium; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Secretary; Standing in the Shadows of Motown; Treasure Planet

4. Cinema Village
22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363) • Auto Focus; The Jimmy Show; Real Women Have Curves; Roger Dodger

5. Film Forum
209 W. Houston St. (212-727-8110) • Massoud, the Afghan; Power and Terror: Noam Chomsky in Our Times; The Trials of Henry Kissinger (see also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

6. Landmark Sunshine Cinema
143 E. Houston St. (212-358-7709) • Adaptation; Bowling for Columbine; Rabbit-Proof Fence; Talk to Her (see also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

7. Loews Village
66 Third Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#952) • Analyze That; The Emperor's Club; Star Trek Nemesis

8. Quad Cinema
34 W. 13th St. (212-255-8800) • El Bola; Intacto; The Way Home

9. The Screening Room
54 Varick St. (212-334-2100) • Blackboards; Comedian; Mostly Martha

10. UA Union Square
13th St. and Broadway (212-253-2225) • About Schmidt; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Evelyn; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; Maid in Manhattan; Solaris; Wes Craven Presents: They

14th–41st Streets

11. Clearview's Chelsea
260 W. 23rd St. (212-777-FILM#597) • Far From Heaven; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; Maid in Manhattan; Solaris; Talk to Her

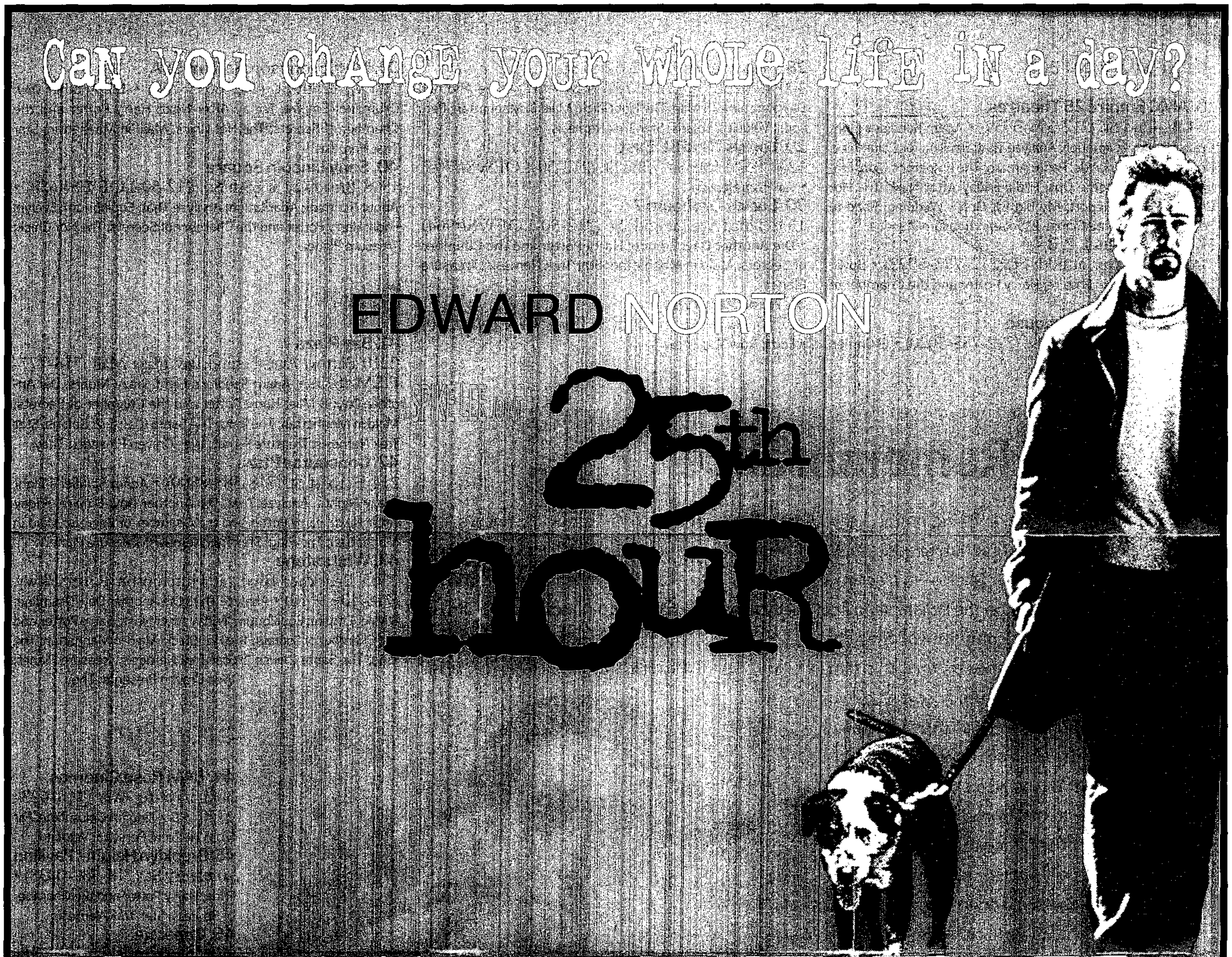
12. Clearview's Chelsea West
333 W. 23rd St. (212-777-FILM#614) • Die Another Day; Drumline

13. Loews 19th St. East
890 Broadway, at 19th St. (212-50-LOEWS#858) • Analyze That; Bowling for Columbine; Frida; Star Trek Nemesis

14. Loews 34th St. Theatre
312 W. 34th St. (212-244-8850) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Drumline; Empire; Equilibrium; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis; Wes Craven Presents: They

15. Loews Kips Bay Theatre
550 Second Ave., at 32nd St. (212-50-LOEWS#558) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; The Emperor's Club; Equilibrium; Frida; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; Maid in Manhattan; Solaris; Star Trek Nemesis

PHOTOGRAPH BY SIDNEY BALDWIN.



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42nd–60th Streets

16. AMC Empire 25 Theatres
234 W. 42nd St. (212-398-3939) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Adaptation; Analyze That; Bowling for Columbine; Drumline; El Crimen del Padre Amaro; The Emperor's Club; Empire; Evelyn; Extreme Ops; Frida; Friday After Next; The Hot Chick; Minority Report; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Road to Perdition; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Treasure Planet

17. CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3
1001 Third Ave., at 60th St. (212-753-6022) • Bowling for Columbine; Empire; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

18. CC Eastside Playhouse
919 Third Ave., nr. 55th St. (212-755-3020) • El Crimen del Padre Amaro

19. CC Sutton
205 E. 57th St. (212-759-1411) • Comedian; Equilibrium; God Is Great, I'm Not; Treasure Planet

20. Clearview's 59th Street East
239 E. 59th St. (212-777-FILM#615) • My Big Fat Greek Wedding

21. Clearview's Ziegfeld
141 W. 54th St. (212-777-FILM#602) • Solaris

22. Loews 42nd Street E Walk
42nd St. at Eighth Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#572) • Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Equilibrium; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring; Star Trek Nemesis; Wes Craven Presents: They

23. Loews Astor Plaza
44th St. at Eighth Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#699) • Die Another Day

24. Loews State
1540 Broadway, nr. 45th St. (212-50-LOEWS#901) • Comedian; Ghost Ship; Half Past Dead

25. Paris Theatre
4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800) • Rabbit-Proof Fence

61st Street and Above, East Side

26. CC 86th St. East
210 E. 86th St. (212-777-FILM#763) • Analyze That; Drumline; Frida; The Hot Chick

27. Clearview's Beekman
1254 Second Ave., nr. 65th St. (212-777-FILM#606) • The Emperor's Club

28. Clearview's First & 62nd St.
400 E. 62nd St. (212-777-FILM#957) • Die Another Day; Drumline; 8 Mile; The Hot Chick; Maid in Manhattan; Personal Velocity; Solaris; Star Trek Nemesis

29. Loews 72nd St. East
1230 Third Ave., nr. 72nd St. (212-50-LOEWS#704) • Far From Heaven

30. Loews Orpheum 7
1538 Third Ave., at 86th St. (212-50-LOEWS#964) • Die Another Day; Empire; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet

31. New York Twin
1271 Second Ave., nr. 66th St. (212-505-CINE#590) • Frida; Now You Know

32. UA East
1629 First Ave., at 85th St. (212-249-5100) • Far From Heaven

33. UA Gemini
1210 Second Ave., at 64th St. (212-832-1670) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers

61st Street and Above, West Side

34. Clearview's 62nd and Broadway
1871 Broadway, at 62nd St. (212-777-FILM#864) • Solaris

35. Clearview's Metro Cinema
2626 Broadway, nr. 99th St. (212-777-FILM#609) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers

36. Clearview's Olympia
2770 Broadway, nr. 106th St. (212-777-FILM#613) • Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Solaris

37. Lincoln Plaza Cinemas
30 Lincoln Plaza, on Broadway nr. 62nd St. (212-757-2280) • Bowling for Columbine; Far From Heaven; Real Women Have Curves; Russian Ark; Talk to Her

38. Loews 84th Street
2310 Broadway, at 84th St. (212-50-LOEWS#701) • Die Another Day; Empire; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis

39. Magic Johnson Harlem USA
300 W. 125th St. (212-665-8733) • Die Another Day; Drumline; Empire; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis

40. Sony Lincoln Square
1998 Broadway, at 68th St. (212-50-LOEWS#638) • About Schmidt; Adaptation; Analyze That; Equilibrium; Evelyn; Frida; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; Treasure Planet

Bronx

41. Bay Plaza
2210 Bartow Ave., behind Bay Plaza Mall (718-777-FILM#833) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

42. Concourse Plaza
214 E. 161st St. (718-588-8800) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Empire; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet

43. Whitestone
2505 Bruckner Blvd., at Hutchinson River Pkwy. (718-409-9030) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Drumline; 8 Mile; Empire; Equilibrium; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

Brooklyn

44. BAM Rose Cinemas
30 Lafayette Ave. (718-623-2770) • Bowling for Columbine; Far From Heaven; Personal Velocity

45. Brooklyn Heights Pavilion
70 Henry St. (718-369-0838) • Frida; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Star Trek Nemesis

46. Canarsie
9310 Ave. L, at E. 93rd St. (718-251-0700) • Drumline; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis

47. Cobble Hill Cinema
265 Court St. (718-596-9113) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Far From Heaven; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Maid in Manhattan; Treasure Planet

48. Court Street 14
106 Court St. (718-246-7469) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Empire; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis; Wes Craven Presents: They

49. Kent Triplex
Coney Island Ave. at Ave. H (718-338-3371) • Analyze That; The Hot Chick; Star Trek Nemesis

50. Linden Boulevard Multiplex
Linden Blvd. and Eldert Lane (718-277-0303) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Drumline; 8 Mile; Empire; Equilibrium; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

51. Pavilion
188 Prospect Park West (718-369-0838) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; The Ring; Solaris; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

52. Pavilion Flatbush
314 Flatbush Ave. (718-596-7070) • Die Another Day; Drumline

53. Ridgewood
55-27 Myrtle Ave., at Putnam Ave. (718-821-5993) • Drumline; Empire; The Hot Chick; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis

54. UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay
3907 Shore Pkwy., off Exit 9 at Belt Pkwy. (718-615-

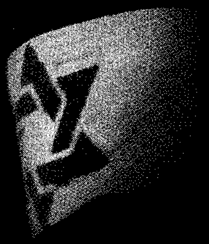
Opening

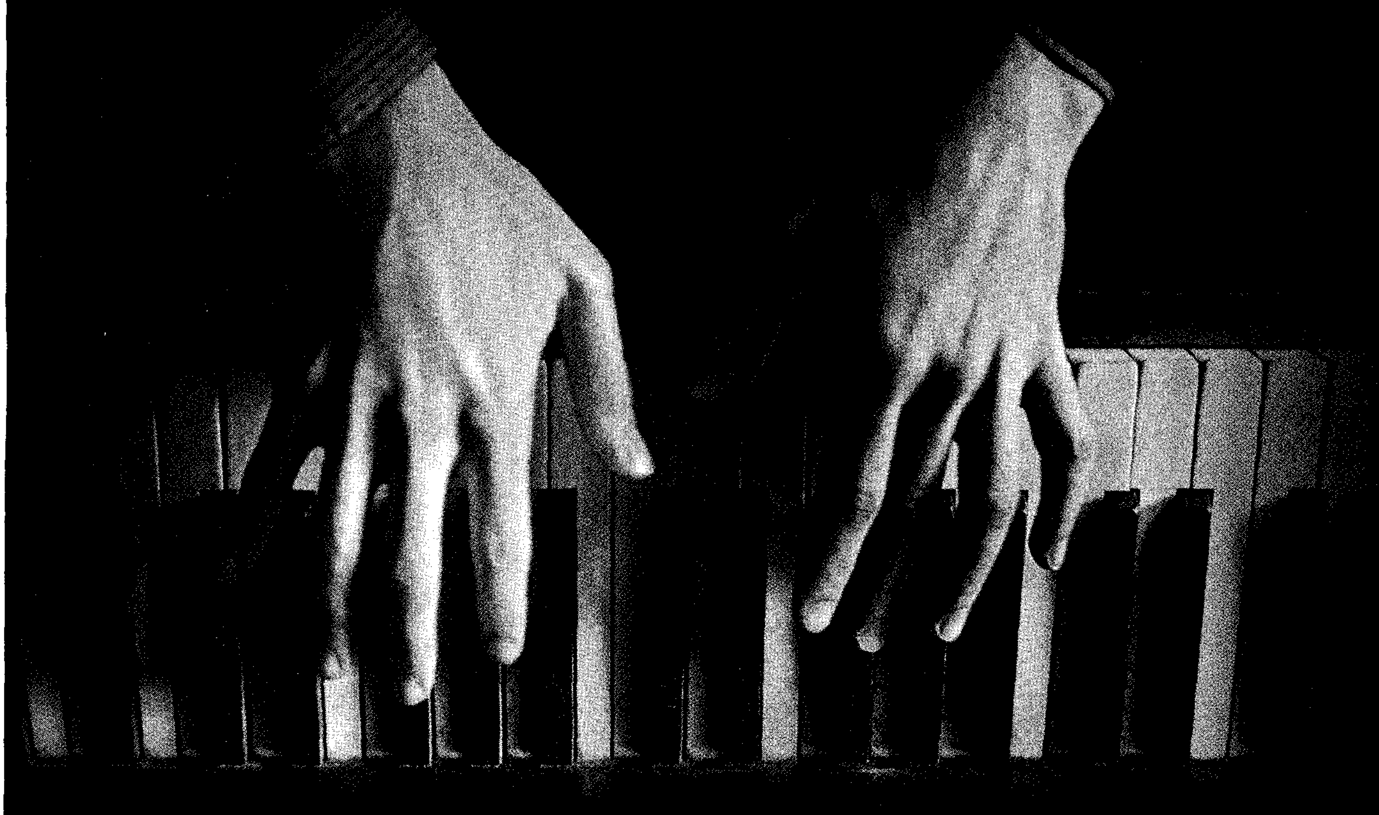
War and Remembrance

"I felt the impact of everything on me," says Adrien Brody of his role in Roman Polanski's **The Pianist**, the director's first film to address World War II. The picture was partially shot in Poland, and is set in the Warsaw Ghetto—a place much like the ghetto Polanski himself survived and his mother did not. Based on the Polish piano star Wladyslaw Szpilman's autobiography, the film required a tremendous commitment from its lead. "I felt the importance of what this film means. It was grueling," Brody says of a role that required him to learn Polish and German, lose 30 pounds, and learn how to play classical piano. "But it was also extremely powerful. I felt honored that Roman cast me." Brody plays much of the film without actors, alone among horrifically realistic re-creations of the bombed-out ghetto. "I cried when I shot my first scene," the 29-year-old says. Still bone-thin, the New York native calls the experience a real turning point in his life. "I tried to experience a taste of the deprivation they felt. I owed it to Szpilman, and I owed it to Roman as well." Opens December 27.

POLE POSITION: Adrien Brody stars in Polanski's *The Pianist*.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY FERRANDIS.





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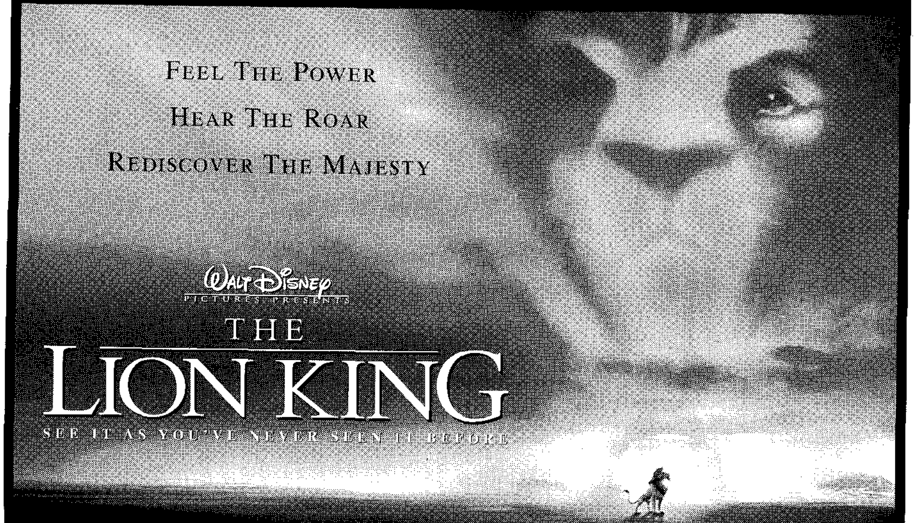
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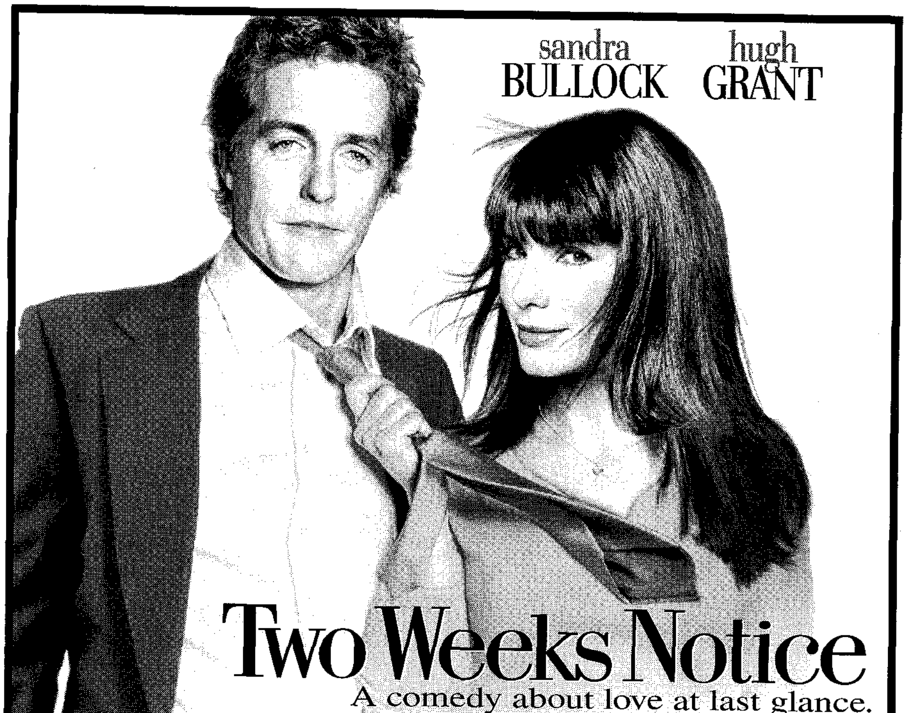

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Queens

55. Centre Sunnyside
42-17 Queens Blvd. (718-361-6869) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Maid in Manhattan; The Santa Clause 2; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet

56. Cinemart
106-03 Metropolitan Ave., at 72nd Rd., Forest Hills (718-261-2244) • The Emperor's Club; Equilibrium; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet

57. College Point Multiplex
28-55 Ulmer St., Whitestone (718-886-4900) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet

58. Jackson Triplex
82nd St. at Roosevelt Ave. (718-478-6777) • Drumline; Empire; Star Trek Nemesis; Wes Craven Presents: They

59. Jamaica Multiplex Cinema
1 Jamaica Center, at Jamaica Ave. and Parsons Blvd. (718-291-9400) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Drumline; 8 Mile; Empire; Equilibrium; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

60. Kaufman Astoria Cinema
38th St. at 35th Ave. (718-786-2020) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Drumline; 8 Mile; Empire; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet

61. Kew Gardens Cinemas
81-05 Lefferts Blvd. (718-441-9835) • El Crimen del Padre Amaro; Far From Heaven; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Real Women Have Curves; Roger Dodger; The Way Home

62. Main Street Cinemas
72-66 Main St. (718-263-4828) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet

63. North Shore Towers
27-10 Grand Central Pkwy., Floral Park (718-229-7702) • El Crimen del Padre Amaro; Real Women Have Curves; Shanghai Ghetto; Solaris

64. Plaza
103–14 Roosevelt Ave., at 103rd St., Corona (718-639-0012) • Empire; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis

65. UA Brandon Cinema
70-20 Austin St., Forest Hills (718-544-1020) • Analyze That; Solaris

66. UA Crossbay II
92-10 Rockaway Blvd., at 93rd St., Ozone Park (718-641-5330) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Extreme Ops; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet

67. UA Crossbay III
94-11 Rockaway Blvd., at Woodhaven Blvd., Ozone Park (718-848-1738) • Die Another Day; Drumline; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; The Ring

68. UA Midway
108-22 Queens Blvd., at 71st Ave., Forest Hills (718-544-5545) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Die Another Day; Drumline; 8 Mile; Empire; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring

69. UA Movieworld
242-02 61st Ave., off Exit 31, Douglaston (718-423-7200) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; Maid in Manhattan; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Solaris

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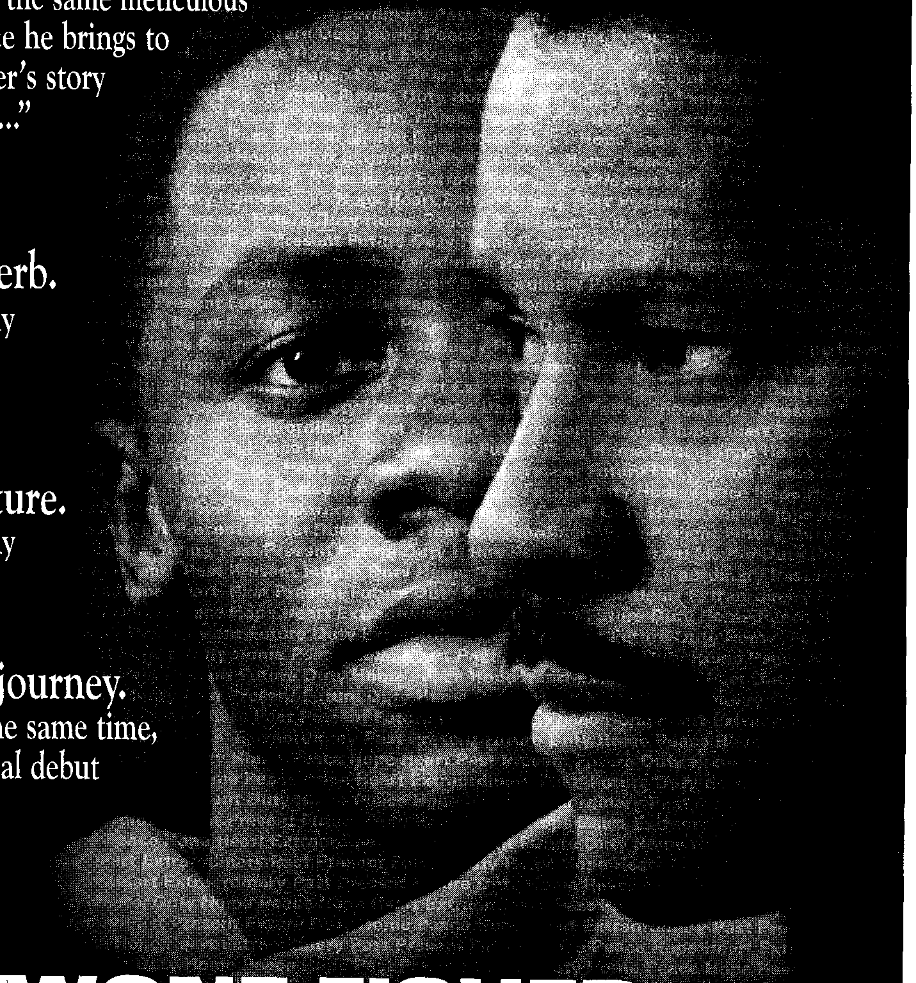
–Joel Siegel, ABC-TV



“Denzel Washington’s directorial debut is superb. Every performance is beautifully modulated... Derek Luke has movie star magnetism.”

–Stephen Farber, MOVIELINE

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–Lou Lumenick, NEW YORK POST

“A masterful emotional journey. Inspirational and dramatic at the same time, with a sharply focused directorial debut by Denzel Washington and an equally impressive acting debut by Derek Luke.”

–David Sheehan, CBS-TV

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Staten Island

70. Atrium
680 Arthur Kill Rd., nr. Richmond Ave., Eltingville (718-317-8300) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

71. Staten Island Stadium 16
2474 Forest Ave. (718-273-4200) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; 8 Mile; The Emperor's Club; Empire; Extreme Ops; Friday After Next; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Solaris; Solaris; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

72. UA Hylan Plaza
107 Mill Rd., at Hylan Blvd., New Dorp (718-351-0805) • Analyze That; Die Another Day; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; Maid in Manhattan; Star Trek Nemesis

73. UA Movies at Staten Island
141 E. Service Rd., at Victory Blvd., Travis (718-983-9600) • Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights; Analyze That; Die Another Day; Drumline; 8 Mile; Empire; Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets; The Hot Chick; The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers ; Maid in Manhattan; The Ring; The Santa Clause 2; Star Trek Nemesis; Treasure Planet; Treasure Planet; Wes Craven Presents: They

Museums, Societies, Etc.

74. American Museum of the Moving Image
36-01 35th Ave., Astoria (718-784-0077); $8.50. • "Directed by Martin Scorsese." 12/21–12/22: *A Personal Journey With Martin Scorsese Through American Movies* (1995). 12/28–12/29: *My Voyage to Italy* (2001).

75. Film Forum
209 W. Houston St. (212-727-8110); $9.75. • 12/27–1/2: *The Apartment* (1960). "Altman's 70s." 12/18: *California Split* (1974); *Buffalo Bill and the Indians* (1976). 12/19: *Thieves Like Us* (1974).

76. Film Society of Lincoln Center
65 W. 65th St., plaza level (212-875-5600); $9. • "Spanish Cinema Now." 12/19: *Memories of Guerilla Warfare* (2002); *The Mind of a Killer* (2002). 12/20: *Sola Mia* (2001); *Carol's Journey* (2002). 12/21: *Perdita Durango* (1997); *Carol's Journey* (2002); *The Impatient Alchemist* (2002). 12/22: *Dying of Laughter* (1999). 12/23: *Beyond Desire* (2002); *The City Without Limits* (2002). 12/24: *Lázaro's Girlfriend* (2002). "People Are Funny: The Films of Leo McCarey." 12/27: *The Awful Truth* (1937); *Make Way for Tomorrow* (1937). 12/29: *My Son John* (1952); *Good Sam* (1948). 12/30: *Once Upon a Honeymoon* (1942). 12/31: *Love Affair* (1942); *An Affair to Remember* (1957).

77. Landmark Sunshine Cinema
143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0576); $10. • "Midnight Movies." 12/20–12/21: *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986). 12/27–12/28: *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (1992).

78. Makor
35 W. 67th St. (212-601-1000); $9. • 12/23–12/26: *The Producers* (1968).

79. MoMA Film at the Gramercy Theatre
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900); $12. • "Positif Champions: 50 Years of Cinema." 12/26: *The African Queen* (1951); *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955); *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949); *California Split* (1974). 12/27: *Van Gogh* (1991); *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1962); *Repulsion* (1965). 12/28: *The Errand Boy* (1961); *The Ladies' Man* (1961); *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949); *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (1959); *Excalibur* (1981). 12/29: *Fargo* (1996); *Fanny and Alexander* (1982); *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). "Documentary Fortnight." 12/19: *Encounters of the WTC Kind* (2001); *Souvenir* (2001); *Afghan Alphabet* (2002); *War and Peace* (2002). 12/20: *Rocket Experts* (2002); *Sister Helen* (2001); *A Bookshelf on Top of the Sky* (2002). 12/21: *Confession* (2001); *A Hungarian Passport* (2001); *OT: Our Town* (2002). 12/22: *Some Real Heat* (2001); *This and That and Other Misunderstandings* (2001). 12/23: *Past Perfect* (2002); *Reconstruction* (2001).

TRAILERS

RISKY BUSINESS **Ben Stiller**, **Jennifer Aniston**, and **Philip Seymour Hoffman** breezed through the city recently for three days of filming on an as-yet-untitled project from director **John Hamburg** (best known for writing *Zoolander* and *Meet the Parents*). The romantic comedy stars Stiller as a risk-averse neurotic whose life is thrown into turmoil when he falls for a dangerous woman; **Debra Messing**, **Hank Azaria**, and **Alec Baldwin** also star. Production will then continue in Los Angeles and Hawaii; Jersey Films produces.

DANGER, WILL SMITH! *Men in Black* star **Will Smith** (whose next film, *Bad Boys 2*, doesn't come out until next summer) has signed on to appear in *I, Robot* for 20th Century Fox. Based on the classic collection of short stories by sci-fi god Isaac Asimov, the film is set in a robot-riddled future in which the automatons have started to disobey human laws; it focuses on a detective on the trail of one of the new criminal breeds. **Alex Proyas** (*The Crow*) directs; production kicks off in April.

CONSPIRACY THEORY **Leonardo DiCaprio** (after braving the box office twice this month, for the first time since 2000's *The Beach*) is now in talks to star in *Bombshell* for *Shipping News* director **Lasse Hallström** (with whom he also worked on *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*). The thriller will be adapted from the 1997 book *Bombshell: The Secret Story of America's Unknown Atomic Spy Conspiracy*, about an American scientist who leaked secrets to the Soviet Union. Universal will distribute.

CRACKING THE CODE **Tim Robbins** and **Samantha Morton** (who played the creepy clairvoyant in *Minority Report*) are headed to London next month to start production on the suspense thriller *Code 46* for the British production company Revolution Films. In the film, set in a *Brave New World*-ish future, the two will play a couple whose relationship is called into question by the shady, super-controlling government. **Michael Winterbottom** (*24 Hour Party People*) directs; United Artists distributes. SARA CARDACE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBIN PLATZER/TWIN IMAGES.

Advertisement

New Years 2003

ABOVE RESTAURANT
Hilton Times Square
Sky Lobby
234 West 42nd Street
212.642.2626

This handsome hideaway is the perfect New Year's spot, set atop the glistening lights of 42nd Street with fantastic "Gotham-City" views and spectacular American cuisine. A $95 four-course prix fixe menu includes unlimited house wine and a champagne toast. Afterwards, venture outside to watch the Ball drop! Reservations required.

BRYANT PARK GRILL
25 West 40th Street
212-921-2100 ext. 120

Bryant Park Grill and ClubPlanet are hosting New Year's Eve 2003 with a DJ and dancing all night, hors d'oeuvres, top-shelf open bar, midnight champagne toast and breakfast. Bryant Park Grill's elegant and sophisticated dining room is the perfect setting for your New Year's Eve celebrations. bryantpark.clubplanet.com

CANDELA RESTAURANT
116 East 16th Street
212.254.1600

Ring in 2003 with style at Candela. Enjoy either a $45 tasting menu or an a la carte dinner from 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Come for our sensational New Year's Eve Bash 9:30 p.m. – 3:30 a.m. Tickets are $125 p.p. and include an open bar, hors d'oeuvres, DJ and dancing 'til dawn. www.candelarestaurant.com

HI-LIFE
1340 First Avenue
(at 72nd Street)
212.249.3600

477 Amsterdam Avenue
(at 83rd Street)
212.787.7199

Our blinking neon martini glass becomes a champagne flute for the big one. Celebrate New Year's Eve in our classic 30's restaurant and lounge with a bountiful buffet, open bar, live DJ, dancing all night and a "Times Square Ball Dropping" ceremony at midnight: $100 all inclusive. Pre-party dinners, with champagne specials, 5 – 9 p.m. New Year's Day brunch 12 – 5 p.m. www.hi-life.com

MELI MELO
110 Madison Avenue
(bet. 29th & 30th Sts.)
212.686.5551

Celebrate New Year's Eve in Meli Melo's joyful atmosphere. Chef-owner Bernard will prepare a sumptuous four-course dinner for $55 p.p., served after 9 p.m. Choose from six entrees, including roast duck, black angus sirloin steak and venison, as only Chef Bernard can prepare them. Regular menu from 5–8 p.m. Reservations required. Open until the wee hours. www.melimelonyc.com

MONTPARNASSE
230 East 51st Street
(bet. 2nd & 3rd Aves.)
212.758.6633

Celebrate the New Year with French style at this award-winning bistro called "a much needed touch of Paris on the East Side" by Zagat 2003. Feast on a luxurious five-course menu, featuring caviar, foie gras and champagne. Live entertainment, dancing and party favors. $95 p.p. Early seating three-course dinner with unlimited wine: $35 p.p. Spend Christmas in Provence with a three-course feast: $42 p.p. Reservations required.

SEL ET POIVRE
853 Lexington Avenue
212.517.5780

Make your last meal of 2002 memorable in the casual elegance of this cozy bistro. Savor French country style cuisine with favorites such as French onion soup, steak au poivre and more. Enjoy a festive family Christmas dinner with a three-course prix fixe menu including roast turkey and grilled salmon plus a Buche de Noel cake: $26.95. A la carte available. www.seletpoivrenyc.com

UNITY RESTAURANT
102 North End Avenue
646.769.4200
Embassy Suites
212.945.0100

Toast the New Year at Downtown's newest hotspot, recently rated 2 stars by Crains. For those looking to avoid the long lines and "hype" of New Year's Eve, $75 buys you an open bar and noshes from an American-style tapas bar. Even better...package it with the Embassy Suites hotel upstairs, and get 2 party tickets, a suite, and full breakfast for $350!

WORLD YACHT DINING CRUISES
Pier 81, West 41st Street
at the Hudson River
212.630.8100

Ring in the New Year with pizzazz and front-row seats to the exclusive world class GRUCCI fireworks at the Statue! Celebrate with a champagne welcome toast; lavish six-course, sit-down dinner; live band with dancing; party favors; and spectacular skyline views. Board at 9 p.m., sail from 10 p.m. – 1 a.m., and finish off with a dockside party until 1:30 a.m. Reservations required. www.worldyacht.com cue

Theater

Edited by Ada Calhoun

Broadway

Previews and Openings

Dinner at Eight
High-society New Yorkers behave badly to highly comic effect in George S. Kaufman's and Edna Ferber's 1932 dinner-party play. $55–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 12/19 opening. (See box.) • Vivian Beaumont Theater, Lincoln Center (212-239-6200).

Tartuffe
Joe Dowling directs Molière's farce in a Roundabout Theatre Company production. $40–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. In previews for a 1/9 opening. Through 2/16. • American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. (212-719-1300).

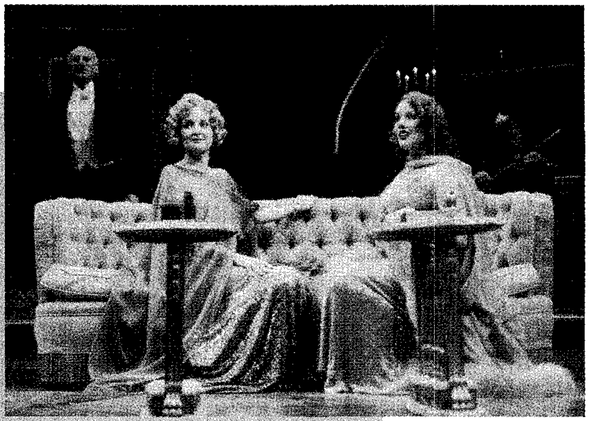
Now Playing

Aida
Disney's epic musical about the Nubian princess Aida (now played by Simone) and the Egyptian prince who captures her, with music by Elton John and lyrics by Tim Rice. Eye-popping sets and costumes by Bob Crowley. $25–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Palace Theatre, 1554 Broadway, at 47th St. (212-307-4747).

Opening

Party Girl

"Millicent Jordan is a Park Avenue society woman," says Broadway darling Christine Ebersole of her ambitious party-hostess character in George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber's 1932 comedy **Dinner at Eight**, which opens December 19. "To her, the dinner party is a very important function. It's serious business. This is the one area in which Millicent rules. She's smart and very socially savvy." And how does it compare to the witty 1933 movie (which features Jean Harlow and Lionel Barrymore)? "This production has darker shades—it doesn't gloss over anything. It takes place during the Depression, and Hitler's coming into power." But never fear: The party still disintegrates into a tangle of social intrigue, and, notes Ebersole, those dresses are still quite simply "stunning!" (See "Broadway: Previews and Openings.")



ON THE COUCH: Christine Ebersole, left, and Emily Skinner.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOAN MARCUS.

Beauty and the Beast
The family-friendly musical adaptation of Disney's film is no *Lion King*, but it's still entertaining kids by the busload. Jamie-Lynn Sigler of *The Sopranos* is Belle. $25–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. (212-307-4747).

★ Cabaret
Sam Mendes's 1998 Tony-winning adaptation of the musical based on Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories* is dark in spirit and light on clothes. The decadent world of Weimar-era Berlin cabaret is re-created, appropriately enough, in what was once the notorious nightclub Studio 54. Molly Ringwald stars. Raul Esparza is the emcee through 12/31. $45–$95. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. • Studio 54, 254 W. 54th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Chicago
This lurid musical about the celebrity potential of female murderers won six Tonys in 1996. In this stylish production, choreographed by Ann Reinking (after Bob Fosse) and directed by Walter Bobbie, female inmates in a Jazz Age Chicago prison vie for the attention of a flashy lawyer (now Billy Zane of *Titanic*) and the tabloid press. $20–$90. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. • Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

Dance of the Vampires
Michael Crawford, the original Phantom of the Opera, stars as Count Von Krolock, a nineteenth-century vampire who tries to win the soul and body of a beautiful young woman. See John Simon's review in this issue. $25–$95. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Minskoff Theatre, 200 W. 45th St. (212-307-4100).

Flower Drum Song
Despite David Henry Hwang's p.c. new book, there are still plenty of clichés in this production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical about a Chinese nightclub in San Francisco. But the razzmatazz remains, too, and most of the songs, even wrenched out of context, are not without charm. (Simon; 10/28/02) $65–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Virginia Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. (212-239-6200).

★ 42nd Street
The hit 1933 movie about the chorus girl who becomes a star was made into a Broadway musical in 1980 and ran for eight years. The show is back, and it's an absolute knockout. *42nd Street* is on 42nd Street, God is in his Heaven, and all is right with the world. Now Kate Levering is back, too, as the lead. (Simon; 5/14/01) $25–$100. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. (212-307-4100).

★ Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune
On 1/1, Rosie Perez and Joe Pantoliano take over for Edie Falco and Stanley Tucci in this revival, under Joe Mantello's direction, of Terrence McNally's tender, satisfying play about a waitress and a short-order cook in New York who spend the night together. (Simon; 8/19/02) $35–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Belasco Theatre, 111 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

'TIS THE SEASON

. . . for schedule changes. Many theaters will be dark December 24 and 25 and January 1, but will add performances on December 23, 26, and 30. Be sure to call ahead.

The Graduate
Lorraine Bracco (*The Sopranos*) now stars as Mrs. Robinson in Terry Johnson's disastrous stage adaptation of the 1967 film. (Simon; 4/15/02) $21–$81. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Plymouth Theatre, 236 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Hairspray
This exuberant musical based on John Waters's 1988 film follows the efforts of plump teen Tracy Turnblad (Marissa Jaret Winokur) to win over the hunk and the world as a dancer and integrationist on *The Corny Collins Show*. So many numbers bring down the house, it's a wonder the Neil Simon Theatre is still standing after the final curtain. (Gerard; 8/26/02) $65–$100. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Neil Simon Theatre, 250 W. 52nd St. (212-307-4100).

★ Hollywood Arms
Hal Prince directs this thoroughly endearing new play by Carrie Hamilton and Carol Burnett based on Burnett's memoir about growing up at the foot of the Hollywood Hills. (Simon; 11/11/02) $20–$80. Tues.–Sat at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Cort Theater, 138 W. 48th St. (212-239-6200).

Imaginary Friends
Swoosie Kurtz and Cherry Jones star in Nora Ephron's play about the vicious rivalry between writers Lillian Hellman and Mary McCarthy. $55–$90. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St. (212-239-6200).

Into the Woods
Vanessa Williams stars in Stephen Sondheim's mythic Tony winner, a journey through the fairy-tale forests of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and others. (Simon; 5/13/02) $40–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 12/29. • Broadhurst Theater, 235 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

La Bohème
Baz Luhrmann's much-anticipated production of Puccini's opera, with three principal casts performing in rotation. See John Simon's review in this issue. $20–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Broadway Theatre, 1681 Broadway, at 52nd St. (212-239-6200).

Les Misérables
This popular button-pusher based on the Victor Hugo novel, featuring over-the-top songs like "Do You Hear the People Sing?," is in its seventeenth year. $20–$85.

Ground Rules Except where noted, Broadway shows begin at 8 and are dark Monday. Capsule reviews are drawn from columns by John Simon and Jeremy Gerard, where noted; others are by Ada Calhoun. Stars (★) indicate our editors' and critics' recommendations. Wallet-watchers should keep in mind the TKTS booths, where discount tickets are available (for that day's performance only) to many Broadway and Off Broadway shows. TKTS booths are at Broadway and 47th Street and in South Street Seaport at the corner of Front and John Streets; call 212-768-1818 for more info. Involved in a production and want to submit details for a possible listing? Call 212-508-0740.

Lonesome Cowboy

"Hank Williams was a rebel and a mystery. He had a sadness he couldn't get rid of," says Nashville dweller Jason Petty. He should know; he's been playing Hank Sr. on and off for six years in the long-running, touring biographical play **Hank Williams: Lost Highway**, which makes its New York debut December 19 at Manhattan Ensemble Theater. The play, which weaves WIlliams's hits, like *Your Cheatin' Heart* and *Hey, Good Lookin',* into the story of his life, gives fans a real understanding of the man behind the music, "heart of darkness and all," says Petty. (See "Off Broadway: Previews and Openings.")

HONKY-TONKER: Jason Petty, center, as Hank Williams.

Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Through 3/15. • Imperial Theater, 249 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Lion King
Based on the popular Disney movie, this inventive production, which won a slew of 1998 Tony awards, is wrought with joyful mastery by experimental director Julie Taymor. $25–$100. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • New Amsterdam Theater, 214 W. 42nd St. (212-307-4747).

Mamma Mia!
Nostalgic for the disco era? This musical about a young bride-to-be and her single mother, scored by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus with 22 Abba tunes, will take you back. $55–$98.75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Winter Garden Theater, 1634 Broadway, at 50th St. (212-563-5544).

Man of La Mancha
This reductive new production of the 1965 musical pales in comparison to the original. As Quixote, Tony winner Brian Stokes Mitchell lacks the suave magic of the role's originator, Richard Kiley. (Simon; 12/16/02) $25–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Martin Beck Theatre, 302 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

Mandy Patinkin: Celebrating Sondheim
Another hundred people just got off of the train . . . to go see this concert of Sondheim's hits from *Sweeney Todd*, *Company*, *Into the Woods*, etc. $65. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 1/6. • Henry Miller Theatre, 124 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

Medea
Fiona Shaw stars as the infanticidal Euripides heroine for a limited Broadway run. $60–$80. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2. Through 2/22. • Brooks Atkinson Theatre, 256 W. 47th St. (211-307-4100).

★ Metamorphoses
Writer-director Mary Zimmerman and her company use a 27-foot-long pool of water to tell Ovid's classic tales of Midas, Narcissus, and more. The myths have power despite some overly cute modern touches. (Simon; 10/29/01) $35–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Circle in the Square Theatre, 1633 Broadway, at 50th St. (212-239-6200).

Movin' Out
A new musical conceived, choreographed, and directed by Twyla Tharp and based on songs by Billy Joel. The dancers are on target and the second act is at moments quite good, but overall, the show fails to tell a story. (Simon; 10/28/02) $40–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Richard Rodgers Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. (212-307-4100).

★ Oklahoma!
Choreographer Susan Stroman (*The Producers*) and director Trevor Nunn (*Les Miz*) bring their acclaimed revival of the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic Stateside. Something seems to have been lost in transit, but the songs, sets, and choreography should be enough to make *Oklahoma!* okay with you. (Simon; 4/8/02) $20–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. and Sun. at 3. • Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. (212-307-4100).

Our Town
Paul Newman gives an insubstantial performance as the Stage Manager in the Westport Country Playhouse's miscalculated production of Thornton Wilder's modern classic about 1903 Grover's Corners, New Hampshire. (Simon; 12/16/02) $75. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 1/26. • Booth Theatre, 222 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

The Phantom of the Opera
Andrew Lloyd Webber's campy version of the macabre tale, given an opulent spin by director Hal Prince, is one of the longest-running shows in Broadway history. And that famous chandelier keeps on falling. $20–$90. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Majestic Theater, 247 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Producers
Brad Oscar and Roger Bart now star in this blockbuster adaptation of Mel Brooks's Oscar-winning 1968 film about Broadway showmen who set out to produce the "surefire flop" *Springtime for Hitler*. The show set records at the 2001 Tony Awards. $30–$100. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • St. James Theatre, 246 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Proof
Anne Heche dazzles as a young woman mourning the death of her mentally unstable mathematician father. Not making things any easier are her type-A sister, a nosy graduate student (Neil Patrick Harris), and a groundbreaking proof of uncertain provenance that appears in her late father's office. Rewarded with a Pulitzer and several Tonys. $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 1/5. • Walter Kerr Theatre, 219 W. 48th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Rent
This Pulitzer-winning musical about early nineties squatter culture has the best pop-music score Broadway has heard in 30 years. Jonathan Larson's songs, his heart, and his soul have lost none of their power in the six years this show has been on Broadway. 'N Sync's Joey Fatone now stars. (Gerard; 9/16/02) $35–$95. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. • Nederlander Theater, 208 W. 41st St. (212-307-4100).

★ Russell Simmons' Def Poetry Jam on Broadway
In an act of faith in spoken word's appeal, Russell Simmons conceived this night of performance poetry, and it's paying off. A D.J. and nine vibrant young slam poets have brought political activism, hip-hop, and a whole new audience to Broadway. $25–$65. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Longacre Theatre, 220 W. 48th St. (212-239-6200).

Say Goodnight Gracie
Before he can join Gracie in the afterlife, George Burns (Frank Gorshin) must give one final performance. The show combines a nostalgic sashay down memory lane with a greatest-hits jokebook, but you'll be glad when Burns finally passes the test and makes it to heaven. (Simon; 10/28/02) $60–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Thoroughly Modern Millie
Sutton Foster turns gawkiness into something gazelle-like as Millie, a young woman who comes to New York to make her fortune. This winner of multiple Tonys is a mind-teasing and heart-tickling delight. (Simon; 4/29/02) $60–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Marquis Theatre, 1535 Broadway, at 45th St. (212-307-4100).

Urinetown
A water shortage forces city-dwellers to comply with a pay-per-pee system in this parody of, or perhaps ode to, the modern musical. *Urinetown* rose from the downtown Fringe Festival to become a Tony winner and Broadway smash, but it lacks internal logic. (Simon; 9/24/01) $35–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun at 3. • Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

Hank Williams: Lost Highway
Randal Myler (*Love, Janis*) directs this new bio-musical of the country star (played by Jason Petty). It follows his career from Alabama honky-tonks to stardom to his death 50 years ago. $40–$45. Mon. and Tues. at 7, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sun. at 7. In previews for a 12/19 opening. Through 1/19. (See box.) • Manhattan Ensemble Theater, 55 Mercer St. (212-239-6200).

The Mercy Seat
Neil LaBute's new two-person drama, set on September 12, 2001, stars Sigourney Weaver and Liev Schreiber as an older woman–younger man couple at a crossroads in their relationship. $50. Schedule varies; call for details. In previews for a 12/18 opening. Through 1/12. • Acorn Theatre, 410 W. 42nd St. (212-279-4200).

Tommy Tune: White Tie and Tails
Beloved nine-time Tony winner Tommy Tune, backed up by the Manhattan Rhythm Kings and a sixteen-member band, performs a program of song-and-dance numbers set to the music of, among others, Cole Porter, and the Beatles. $75. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7. In previews for a 12/18 opening. • Little Shubert Theatre, 422 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Now Playing

Adult Entertainment
Danny Aiello and Jeannie Berlin star in this new Elaine May comedy about six members of the porn industry who decide to go freelance. See John Simon's review in this issue. $25–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave. (212-239-6200).

Almost Live From the Betty Ford Clinic
Celebrity addictions are shamelessly ridiculed by Michael West (*Forbidden Broadway*). $20. Thursdays at 8. Through 1/30. • Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Antigone
Mac Wellman's episodic, linguistically complex adaptation of the Greek tragedy, staged by Big Dance Theater. $32. Thurs.–Sat. at 7, Sun. at 2. Through 12/22. • Dance Theater Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. (212-924-0077).

NEWYORKMETRO.COM
Find a review. For John Simon's theater reviews, go to nymetro.com/archive/simon.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROGER MASTROIANNI.

Bartenders
Another round for Louis Mustillo! His one-man play about six men who serve drinks for a living is on its second theater, following a successful run earlier this fall. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 5, Sun. at 3. • John Houseman Theater, Studio II, 450 W. 42nd St. (212-206-1515).

Betty Rules
The girls of Betty, a politically active band that's been around since the eighties, star as themselves in this self-congratulatory stroll down memory lane. Directed by Michael Greif (*Rent*). $29.90–$44.90. Tues–Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 5. Through 1/5. • Zipper Theatre, 336 W. 37th St. (212-239-6200).

Bewilderness
Comedian Bill Bailey's brand of cynicism did well last year at the Westbeth; now he's brought his one-man show uptown. $40–$45. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 7, Sat. at 10. • 47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. (212-239-6200).

Birdy's Bachelorette Party
Celebrate the upcoming wedding of a sweet legal secretary to her construction-worker boyfriend with wacky antics including a lingerie show, karaoke, and a sex-toy demonstration. $60 includes postshow admission to the club and party favors. Fri. at 9, Sat. at 8. • Culture Club, 179 Varick St. (212-352-3101).

Blessing in Disguise
Seven drag queens battle a club owner for the right to perform. $55. Mon.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 8. • Times Square Theatre, 675 Eighth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-206-1515).

Bliss
Rattlestick Productions continues its eighth season with Ben Bettenbender's play about murder and misunderstanding. $37.50. Wed.–Mon. at 8. Through 12/22. • Rattlestick Theatre, 224 Waverly Pl. (212-206-1515).

Blue Man Group: Tubes
The popular painted men have been performing here since 1991. $55–$65. Tues.–Thurs. at 8; Fri. at 7 and 10; Sat. at 4, 7, and 10; Sun. at 2, 5, and 8. • Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. (212-254-4370).

Blue/Orange
Great acting can't save Joe Penhall's metaphor-rich drama about mental illness and racism, a feat of galloping authorial pretension. (Simon; 12/9/02) $45. Tues.–Sun. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 1/12. • Atlantic Theater Company, 336 W. 20th St. (212-239-6200).

Boston Marriage
This new drawing-room comedy from David Mamet, starring Martha Plimpton and Kate Burton, is preposterous, arrogant, crude, pointless, and numbingly dull. (Simon; 12/2/02) $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 2, Sun. at 7. Through 12/22. • Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200).

Burn This
Elisabeth Shue and Peter Sarsgaard now star in this flaccid, dated Signature Theatre Company production of Lanford Wilson's 1987 play about four New Yorkers grieving for a dead dancer. (Gerard; 9/30/02) $65. Tues.–Sat. at 8. Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Union Square Theater, 100 E. 17th St. (212-307-4100).

A Celtic Christmas
Traditional holiday music, an adaptation of Dylan Thomas's *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, and short stories by Frank McCourt, George Bernard Shaw, and others. $35–$40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 12/29. • Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. (212-727-2737).

A Christmas Carol
F. Murray Abraham is Scrooge in Radio City Entertainment's high-powered 90-minute musical production of the Dickens classic. $29–$79. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 12/29. • Theater at Madison Square Garden, 4 Penn Plaza (212-307-4111).

★ Christmas With the Crawfords
Former Factory denizen Joey Arias plays Joan in this high-glitz musical centered on the Christmas Eve radio broadcast of *Mommie Dearest* fame. $40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 5, Sun. at 7. Through 12/28. (See box.) • Producers Club Theatre II, 358 W. 44th St. (212-206-1515).

Class Mothers '68
Tony winner Priscilla Lopez (*A Chorus Line*) stars in Eric H. Weinberger's new comedy as six different mothers who arrange a musical tribute to their teenage children. $45. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 2/9. • Clurman Theatre at Theatre Row, 410 W. 42nd St. (212-279-4200).

Criss Angel Mindfreak
A futuristic illusion and escape-art show. $15–$55. Mon. and Wed.–Sat. at 8, Fri. at 10:30, Sun. at 7, Sat. at 2 and 5, Sun. at 3. • The World Underground Theatre, Broadway at 43rd St. (212-307-4100).

Crowns
Predictable new play with gospel music based on Michael Cunningham and Craig Marberry's book about black women in their spunkily hypertrophic church hats. (Simon; 12/16/02) $55. Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Wed. at 7, Sun. at 3. Through 1/5. • Second Stage Theatre, 307 W. 43rd. St. (212-246-4422).

★ De La Guarda
A raucous show that's part carnival, part rock concert, and almost entirely airborne. Expect audience participation and mist. $20–$50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Fri. at 10:30, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. • Daryl Roth Theatre, 20 Union Square East, at 15th St. (212-239-6200).

Debbie Does Dallas
What's more contemptible than a clean dirty joke, especially when inflated into a full-length musical? Sherie Rene Scott stars in this jejune, witless travesty of the well-known porn movie. (Simon; 11/18/02) $25–$50. Mon.–Fri. at 8, Fri. at 10:30, Sat. at 7 and 10. • Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. (212-239-6200).

The Donkey Show
A loose disco-musical adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with even looser morals. Cable sex icon Robin Byrd hosts on Wednesdays. $35–$45. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 10:30. • El Flamingo, 547 W. 21st St. (212-307-4100).

★ The Exonerated
Whatever you may think of the death penalty, this play, directed by Bob Balaban and based on interviews with innocent men and women freed from death row, should make you think—and feel—some more. (Simon; 10/28/02) $55. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Bleecker Street Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. (212-307-4100).

Far Away
The U.S. premiere of British playwright Caryl Churchill's cockamamie play is full of discourse about a world in which nations, animals, plants, and objects wage fathomless war in absurd alliances and incomprehensible enmity. (Simon; 11/25/02) $55. Tues.–Thurs. and Sat. at 8, Fri. at 7 and 9, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 1/18. Frances McDormand stars through 12/22. • New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Forbidden Broadway 20th Anniversary Celebration
Clever, long-running spoof of musicals past and present. $49.50–$57. Mon., Tues., Fri., and Sat. at 8:15, Sun. at 3:30 and 7:30, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30. • Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

The Fourth Wall
Not ready for prime time: Sandy Duncan and Charles Kimbrough star in A. R. Gurney's fatuous and smug play about George W. and suburbia. (Simon; 11/25/02) $48. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3. Extended through 12/22. • Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. (212-333-4052).

The General From America
Corin Redgrave stars as Benedict Arnold in Richard Nelson's 1996 play about treason, a miscast, disorienting co-production by Theatre for a New Audience and Houston's Alley Theatre. (Simon; 12/9/02) $55. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. (212-239-6200).

Gone Home
This drama about a writer having problems with his family marks the New York debut of playwright John Corwin. $45. Tues.–Sun. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 1/26. • Manhattan Theatre Club, Stage II, 131 W. 55th St. (212-581-1212).

The Guys
Anne Nelson's play about a fire captain who lost many of his men and an editor who helps him write the eulogies. $55. Tues.–Fri. at 7. Through 12/20. • Flea Theater, 41 White St. (212-206-1515).

Happily Mad
This farce about an Argentine couple who move to Japan is a Latin theater favorite from Repertorio Español, now in its thirty-fifth season. $25–$40. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 1/30. • Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. (212-889-2850).

Harlem Song
George C. Wolfe's new musical traces the music and culture of Harlem from the twenties to the present, and despite re-creating moments like Ella Fitzgerald's winning performance at Amateur Night at the Apollo, there is no real passion behind this production. (Simon; 9/19/02) $20–$55. Sat. at 8, Sun. and Mon. at 7, Sat. at 2 and 5, Sun. at 3. Through 12/31. • Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. (212-307-7171).

Henry V
Saint Crispin's Day comes early this year with a Jean Cocteau Repertory production of the Shakespeare drama. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 1/5. • Jean Cocteau Repertory, 330 Bowery (212-677-0060).

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change
They're here. They're straight. Get used to it. A musical revue about heterosexual love. $49.50–$60. Mon., Tues., Fri., and Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. • Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

The Importance of Being Earnest
Learn from Wilde's masterpiece why being earnest is usually a terrible idea. $40. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 1/2. • Jean Cocteau Repertory, 330 Bowery (212-677-0060).

It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Murder!
The lighting director is the real star of this murder-mystery comedy, which Texan company Pegasus will stage *in living black and white*. $45. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • DR2, 103 E. 15th St. (212-239-6200).

Joe and Betty
Set in the Catskills of the fifties, Murray Mednick's play about the madness-inducing breakup of a marriage is being moved up from Off-Off Broadway to Theatre Row. $45. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 1/12. • Kirk Theatre, 410 W. 42nd St. (212-279-4200).

Jolson & Company
This new musical about Al Jolson, the legendary "Jazz Singer," follows his epic career (1915–1950) through vaudeville, Broadway, radio, and talkies. $65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3. • Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 E. 15th St. (212-239-6200).

Late Night Catechism
Another interactive comedy (this one set in Catholic school) from the producers of *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding*. $40. Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

Love, Janis
A bio-musical based on the book *Love, Janis* by Joplin's sister Laura and performed by a trio of actresses. $45–$100. Mon, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Through 1/5. • Village Theater, 158 Bleecker St. (212-307-4100).

A Man of No Importance
Mediocre musical based on the mediocre 1994 film about a repressed Dublin bus driver who moonlights with an amateur theater company. The story abounds in bittersweet wistfulness while also trying to be a lusty comedy. (Simon; 7/21/02) $65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 12/29. • Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (212-239-6200).

Masha No Home
Lloyd Suh's new play about a Korean-American teenager and a pile of cash. $15. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. Through 12/22. • E.S.T., 549 W. 53rd St. (212-206-1515).

Menopause the Musical
A parody about "the change," set in Bloomingdale's. $49.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Wed., Thurs., Sat., and Sun. at 3. • Playhouse 91, 316 E. 91st St. (212-307-4100).

Monday Night Magic
Internationally known magicians perform in an intimate setting. $29.50–$32.50. Mondays at 8. • McGinn/Cazale Theater, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (212-615-6432).

Naked Boys Singing
Just like a regular musical revue, but without pants. $35–$65. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Actor's Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. So. (212-239-6200).

New Shanghai Circus
Spectacular Chinese circus troupe. $10–$30.

Thurs.–Sat. at 7, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 12 and 5. Through 1/12. • New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Perfect Crime
Warren Manzi's thriller, about a psychiatrist accused of killing her rich husband, and the police detective who falls for her, is the longest running Off Broadway show in New York history. $40. $29.90–$39.90. Tues.–Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 9:30, Sun. at 7. • Duffy Theater, Broadway at 46th St. (212-695-3401).

Porterphiles
The York Theatre Company presents this new musical revue of more than 30 unpublished Cole Porter songs. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. Through 1/12. • St. Peter's Theatre, 619 Lexington Ave., at 54th St. (212-239-6200).

The Prince and the Pauper
A new musical based on the Twain novel, with music and lyrics by Neil Berg, additional lyrics by Bernie Garzia, and book by Garzia and Ray Roderick. $40–$65. Wed. and Thurs. at 2 and 7:30, Fri. and Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

Puppetry of the Penis
An oddly innocent lesson in "the ancient Australian art of genital origami." $29.90–$39.90. Tues.–Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 9:30, Sun. at 7. • John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

A Pure Gospel Christmas
Producer Eric Krebs (*Little Ham*) stages this festive holiday show, which features a five-piece band and some of New York's best gospel singers. $20–$40. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 12/29. • John Houseman Theater, 450 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Radio City Christmas Spectacular
Santa, the Rockettes, the Wooden Soldiers, and the Living Nativity have been whipping audiences into a Christmas frenzy since 1933. Now with an amazing 3-D opener. $36–$90. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 1/5. • Radio City Music Hall, 1260 Sixth Ave., at 50th St. (212-307-1000).

Rapt
World premiere of Roland Tec's new play about a highly motivated global-communications human-resources administrator. $15. Thurs.–Mon. at 8. Through 12/21. • Culture Project at 45 Bleecker, 45 Bleecker St. (212-352-3101).

Salome: The Reading
Lust, revenge, the Bible, and star power. Al Pacino, Marisa Tomei, and Dianne Wiest participate in this dramatic reading of Oscar Wilde's once-banned drama, with original musical accompaniment. $50. Schedule varies; call for details. Through 12/22. • St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., Dumbo, Brooklyn (866-468-7619).

Stomp
This boisterous riot of found-object percussion has been a-clang since 1994. $35–$60. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Orpheum, 126 Second Ave. (212-477-2477).

The Tempest
The Pearl stages Shakespeare's magical shipwreck-comedy. $30–$40. Tues. at 7, Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. Through 1/26. • Pearl Theatre Company, 80 St. Mark's Pl. (212-598-9802).

Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding
A wedding and reception, with Italian buffet, champagne, and wedding cake. Wonderfully tacky—and, with more than 4,000 performances, it's lasted longer than a lot of real marriages. $75–$80. Thurs.–Sun. at 7, Sun. at 2. • St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St., and Vinnie Black's Coliseum, Hotel Edison, 221 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

☆ Tuesdays With Morrie
This rare play might change your life. Jeffrey Hatcher and Mitch Albom's 90-minute intermissionless stage adaptation of Albom's deeply moving story is indelible, unforgettable—a true memento mori for all of us. (Simon; 12/2/02) $45–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Ln. (212-307-4100).

Underneath the Lintel
In Glen Berger's well-paced drama, a librarian begins a peculiar investigation after discovering a returned book that is 123 years overdue. $40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Vagina Monologues
Eve Ensler's oral history of a body part. Through 12/22, stars Hazelle Goodman, Margot Kidder, and Marin Mazzie. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 5, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Through 1/5. • Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

The Water Coolers
A new musical revue about corporate America from Thomas Michael Allen (creator of *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding*). $50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Dillons, 245 W. 54th St. (212-239-6200).

What Didn't Happen
Playwrights Horizons presents the world premiere of a play by Christopher Shinn about a writer in turmoil. See John Simon's review in this issue. $50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3, Sun. at 7:30. Through 12/22. • Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

★ A Year With Frog and Toad
Arnold Lobel's award-winning *Frog and Toad* books are the inspiration for this new children's musical about the friends' journey through the seasons. $10–$30. Fri. and Sat. at 7, Sat. at 2, Sun. schedule varies; call for details. • New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

★ Yentl
The treasured Folksbiene, America's only (and best) professional Yiddish theater, charmingly presents the Yiddish world premiere of Isaac Bashevis Singer's racy tale about the divine androgyny of the soul. Simultaneous English translation will be provided via headsets. $45. Tues.–Thurs. at 7, Sat. at 8, Sun. at 5:30, Wed. and Sun. at 2. Through 12/29. • PCMH Theatre, 344 W. 36th St. (212-307-4100).

Off-Off Broadway

Cashetta's Magical Christmas
(See box.) $10. Sundays at 10. Through 12/29. • Fez Under Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (212-533-2680).

★ The Flotilla DeBarge Chanukah-Kwanzaa-Christmas Spectacular
(See box.) $12. Sundays at 8. Through 12/29. • Fez Under Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (212-533-2680).

Holiday Punch
(See box.) $18. Sun.–Wed. and Sat. at 8, Fri. at 10. Through 12/21. • Fez Under Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (212-462-9077).

Line
Off–Off Broadway's longest-running play (28 years), Israel Horovitz's comedy is about five people waiting in line for no obvious reason. $10–$15. Wed. at 7, Fri. and Sat. at 9:30. • 13th Street Repertory, 50 W. 13th St. (866-468-7619).

A Murray Little Christmas
(See box.) $12. Fri. and Sat. at 10. 12/20 and 12/21. • The Cutting Room, 19 W. 24th St. (212-539-3197).

★ The Palace of Variety
The Bindlestiff Family Cirkus brings vaudeville back to 42nd Street as the main draw at the new Palace of Variety, which hosts different shows every day of the week. $5–$15. Fri. and Sat. at 10 and midnight, Sat. and Sun. at 4 and 6. See www.bindlestiff.org for a complete schedule. Through 12/31. • The Palace of Variety at Chashama, 125 W. 42nd St. (877-246-3537).

Roundup

Our Gay Apparel

What do you do if the Radio City Christmas Spectacular and its warmhearted uptown ilk leave you cold? Head Off Broadway for these shows by some of downtown's favorite drag performers. As drag king Murray Hill reminds us, " 'Tis the season to knock a few back with pals and forget for a minute that none of us have jobs."

How The Grinch Stole Christmas!

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY: Flotilla DeBarge celebrates it all.

Kings & Queens	What's in the Cards
Cashetta's Magical Christmas Fez Under Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette Street (212-533-2680)	The bawdy singer, queen of illusion, and Wigstock headliner is new to magic, but you'd never know it—the blonde bombshell pulls a reindeer out of a hat, floats Christmas ornaments in midair, and makes a menorah spontaneously ignite. (Through December 29.)
Christmas With the Crawfords Producers Club II, 358 West 44th Street (212-206-1515)	Joan (former Factory denizen Joey Arias) spends Christmas Eve 1944 with a radio host, a slew of starlets . . . oh, and her children. Magnificent costumes, a spot-on Judy Garland, and countless references to *Mommie Dearest* have made this show a holiday favorite for the past ten years. (Through December 28.)
The Flotilla DeBarge Chanukah-Kwanzaa-Christmas Spectacular Fez Under Time Café (address above)	Flotilla's shows are always casually raucous, and this "fully denominational" show has the charming star dancing along to "Hava Nagila," tree-trimming, and reading a children's story about the meaning of Kwanzaa. (Through December 29.)
Holiday Punch Fez Under Time Café (address above)	The venomous Jackie Beat has been doing holiday shows for years, and in her hands, a holiday catharsis is all but guaranteed. Methods employed: song parodies (including "Go to Hell"—a jaded "Silver Bells"), rampant profanity, and—be very afraid—audience participation. (Through December 21.)
A Murray Little Christmas The Cutting Room, 19 West 24th Street (212-539-3197)	Highball in hand, drag king Murray Hill welcomes you to a performance-cum-cocktail party at a stage-semblance of his Canarsie pad. King of kings and of Kings County, Murray rings in the new year with a few holiday songs, a snowball fight, and a slew of vixen visitors, including the Wau-Wau Sisters and burlesque star Dirty Martini. (December 20 and 21.)

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SPIN CYCLE.

Edited by Edith Newhall

Galleries

Solos

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

★ András Böröcz
A new series of carved-pencil figures set within carved-pencil boxes featuring pencil-related tableaux; through 1/25/03. (See box.) • Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. (212-861-7338).

★ James Castle
Constructions and starkly rendered drawings, in soot on found paper, of the houses, barns, and landscapes surrounding the artist's home in Idaho; through 1/18/02. • Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (212-794-0550).

★ Joseph Cornell
Rarely exhibited collages, box constructions, objects, and toys; through 1/18/03. • Stone, 113 E. 90th St. (212-987-4997).

★ Peter Doig
Works on paper based on the artist's personal snapshots, popular films, art history, and advertising; through 1/19/03. • Werner, 4 E. 77th St. (212-988-1623).

★ John Evans
A selection of collages by this artist who began creating a collage every day in the early sixties and then ended his daily ritual on December 31, 2000; through 12/21. (See box.) • Zoubok, 1014 Madison Ave. (212-879-5858).

★ Alfred H. Maurer/Jonathan Silver
An installation of paintings by the former (1868–1932) and sculpture by the latter (1937–1992); through 1/25/03. • Bookstein, 50 E. 78th St. (212-439-9605).

★ Fausto Melotti
Drawings and watercolors dating from the fifties and sixties by the Italian sculptor known for his delicate, twittering forms; through 1/31/03. • Castelli, 59 E. 79th St. (212-249-4470).

★ Paul Thek and Edwin Klein
Document, a collaborative three-dimensional "album" of photographs, drawings, cards, and objects created in 1969 by the former, an American artist (1933–1988), and the latter, a Dutch designer and photographer; through 12/31. • Gat, 1100 Madison Ave. (212-327-0441).

57th Street Area

★ Jennifer Bartlett
New paintings; through 12/28. • Artemis • Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave. (212-445-0444).

Laurent de Brunhoff
Watercolors for the new book *Babar's Yoga for Elephants* (Abrams); through 1/6/03. • Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. (212-397-0669).

Jim Dine
New horizontal paintings on wood panel and canvas that depict hand tools; through 1/11/03. • PaceWildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. (212-421-3292)

Alan Feltus
Recent paintings that depict figures in enigmatic dramas; through 1/18/03. • Forum, 745 Fifth Ave. (212-355-4545).

Al Held and George Sugarman
Works from the sixties by both artists, including boldly colored abstract paintings by the former and painted wood sculptures by the latter. Through 1/25/03. • Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. (212-397-6780)

★ David Kapp
Recent paintings of New York City street scenes; through 1/4/03. • De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave. (212-262-5050).

★ William Kentridge
Zeno Writing, a new film by the South African artist based on Italo Svevo's 1923 novel, *Confessions of Zeno*, and a series of related drawings; through 1/4/03. • Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (212-977-7160).

Käthe Kollwitz
An exhibition of etchings, lithographs, and woodcuts coinciding with the publication of Alexandra von dem Knesebeck's newly revised *catalogue raisonné* of the artist's work; through 1/4/03. • St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (212-245-6734).

★ Mick O'Shea
An installation that uses miniatures, toys, and ephemeral objects to suggest a battlefield; through 1/18/03. • Smith, 501 Lexington Ave. (212-832-8831).

Daniel Scheimberg
Paintings that depict blurred military iconography, technological artifacts, and landscape; through 1/10/03. • Barquet, 41 E. 57th St. (212-644-9090).

Soho and Tribeca

Carolyn Brady/Remy Hysbergue
Watercolor still lifes of flower bouquets/Abstract paintings on white Komacel PVC panels. Through 1/11/03. • Hoffman, 429 W. Broadway (212-966-6676).

Lisa Corinne Davis
Paintings that depict portraits in grid-like formations; through 1/11/03. • Kelly, 591 Broadway (212-226-1660).

David Hammons
An installation titled *Concerto in Black and Blue*; through 2/1/03. • Ace, 275 Hudson Ave. (212-255-5599).

Misaki Kawai
Airplanes for dolls, constructed from cardboard, fabric, and cheaply manufactured objects; through 1/12/03. • Schachter ConTEMPorary, 14 Charles La. (212-807-6669).

★ Jutta Koether and Steven Parrino
A collaborative Dada-influenced environment of "failed paintings" in which a series of noise performances will take place; 1/4/03 at 8. • Swiss Institute, 495 Broadway (212-925-2035).

★ Lisa Ruyter
Paintings of party scenes based on photographs taken by the artist at night in bars and restaurants; through 1/4/03. • Koenig, 249 Centre St. (212-334-9255).

★ Peter Soriano
New sculptures, including tool-like porcelain works made at Limoges, where the artist was recently invited to work, and works in cast polyester resin and in sculpmetal and tubing; through 1/25/03. (See box.) • Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway (212-941-0012).

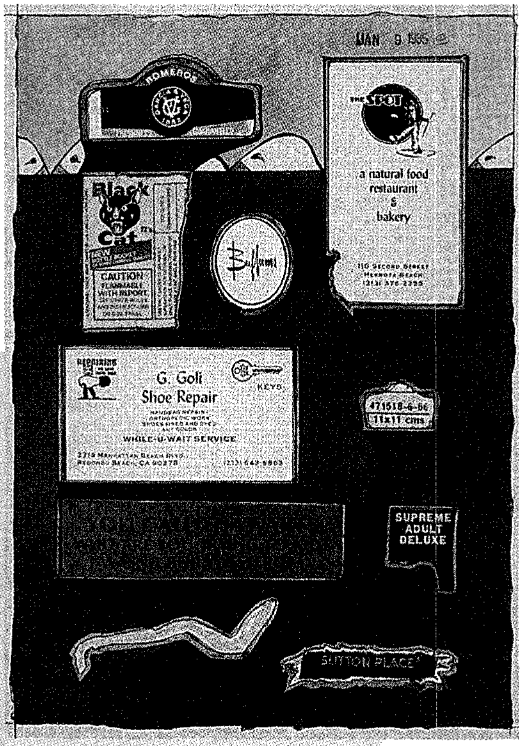
Cecelia Vicuña and César Paternosta
Photographs documenting street installations by the

Ground Rules Galleries are generally open Tuesday through Saturday, from between 10 and 11 to between 5 and 6. Stars (★) indicate our editors' recommendations.

Retrospective

Collage Boy

At the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, **John Evans** was a ceramics major who also painted. In New York, where he moved in 1963, Evans found a medium more conducive to apartment living. "My first job was at the Metropolitan Museum in 1964, doing the 'quarter mail' "—in those days, *New Yorker* readers could clip out the museum's advertisement, mail it in with 25 cents, and receive a catalogue of the museum's Christmas cards. "I would take the information and stack up the quarters. One time, I noticed a clipping in the trash with a face that just said *Do something with me.* So I took it home, and that was the first collage." A modest career followed; then, in 1997, a young dealer named Pavel Zoubok saw Evans's work in a group show at Knoedler & Company and immediately signed him up for his new gallery. "John's work was a spectacular discovery," Zoubok says. "He's one of the great American collagists, period." Zoubok then introduced Evans's work to Valerie S. Komor, a curator at the New-York Historical Society, where "New York Diary: The Collages of John Evans" is now on view. (Zoubok has an Evans show at his Madison Avenue gallery through December 21.) The irony, perhaps, is that Evans quit making collages on December 31, 2000. "They were taking over my room, and the end of the twentieth century seemed like a good time to stop," Evans says. "But I still make birthday cards." (Through March 9; see "Museums.") E.N.



WE CALL THIS ART! John Evans's *January 9, 1985.*

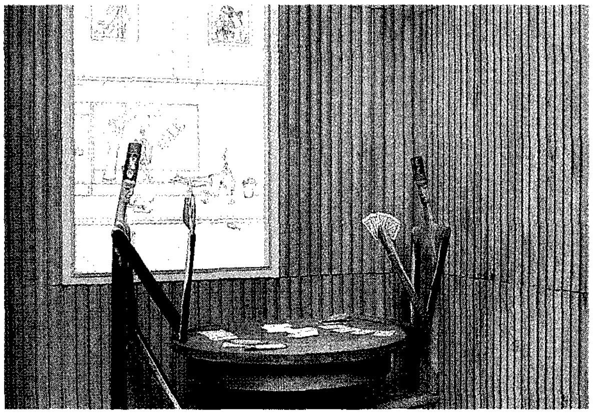
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Talent

Eraserhead: The Comedy

András Böröcz has been getting pencils to do funny things for more than ten years, but his latest sculptures push the theme to the limit. This time, the Hungarian-born artist has created pencil boxes of glued-together pencils that open to reveal tableaux of carved-pencil figures enacting archetypal scenes from art history, such as *The Card Players* or *The Artist in His Studio*. And on the wall behind them? Paintings and drawings of you-know-what. (Through January 25; see "Galleries: Solos.")

NO CHEATING: András Böröcz's *Cardplayers*, 2002.



former, and abstract paintings by the latter; through 1/19/03. • Latincollector, 153 Hudson St. (212-334-7813).

Chelsea

★ Siah Armajani
Recent architectural sculptures; through 1/11/03. • Senior & Shopmaker, 21 E. 26th St. (212-213-6767).

★ Michael Ashkin
Photographic grids of marginalized landscapes and related written pieces from his "Notes Toward Desolation"; through 1/18/03. • Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. (212-627-6000).

Kutlug Ataman
Two new video installations; through 1/11/03. • Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. (212-255-2923).

Benjamin Butler
Paintings and drawings of romantic mountain scenes; through 1/4/03. • Team, 527 W. 26th St. (212-279-9219).

★ Chuck Close
New paintings of the artist and his family members, and of the artists Cecily Brown, Lisa Yuskavage, Paul Cadmus, James Siena, and Robert Rauschenberg, plus a companion exhibit of daguerreotype portraits of art-world notables; through 1/11/03. • Proposition, 559 W. 22nd St. (212-242-0035).

★ Mark Dion
An installation of a large decomposing tree set inside a glass greenhouse that is intended to emphasize the inherent contradictions between the nature of an artifact and the context in which it is displayed for popular consumption; through 1/4/03. • Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. (212-414-4144).

★ Laurie Fendrich
Geometric abstract paintings whose compositions recall Russian constructivism and works by such American modernists as George L.K. Morris and Stuart Davis; through 1/25/03. • Snyder, 601 W. 29th St. (212-871-1077).

Christian Garnett
Op-inspired paintings that depict grids of circles over luminous color fields; through 1/4/03. • Dee, 545 W. 20th St. (212-924-7545).

Eric Goulder and Dana Volkert
A collaborative installation of sculptures of human heads by the former and meticulously rendered paintings of insects and sea creatures by the latter. Through 1/11/03. • Spike, 547 W. 20th St. (212-627-4100).

★ Yayoi Kusama
Five recent installations that reflect the artist's interest in new technology while retaining her long-standing preoccupation with ideas of repetition and infinity; through 1/18/03. • Miller, 524 W. 26th St. (212-366-4774).

★ Wolfgang Laib
Drawings and photographs taken during the artist's travels; through 1/11/03. • Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. (212-255-8450).

★ Christian Marclay
A four-screen DVD projection synchronizing hundreds of Hollywood film excerpts that feature actors and musicians playing instruments or making sound; through 1/18/03. • Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. (212-255-1105).

John Newsom
Paintings of insects and birds against patterned backgrounds; through 1/4/03. • Stux, 529 W. 20th St. (212-352-1600).

Alessandro Pessoli
A DVD animation and related drawings; through 1/16/03. • Kern, 532 W. 20th St. (212-367-9663).

Catya Plate
Sculptures and mixed-media works that suggest contemplations on sexuality, disease, mortality, spirituality, and healing; through 12/31. • Art Resources Transfer, 210 Eleventh Ave. (212-691-5956).

★ Monique Prieto/Saint Clair Cemin
Recent abstract paintings/A new marble sculpture. Through 1/4/03. • Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. (212-242-7727).

Harriet Shorr
Paintings that depict elements of landscapes and still life; through 1/4/03. • Pelavin, 13 Jay St. (212-925-9424).

★ Andy Warhol
Drawings dating from 1954 to 1985, depicting paintbrushes, paint cans, flowers, fruit, cigarettes, and other subjects; through 1/11/03. • Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave. (212-563-4474).

★ Eric Wesley
A cigarette-producing operation, including a germination unit, growing tables, drying boxes for tobacco plants, and a sculpture of a U-Haul trailer; through 2/1/03. • Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. (212-206-7100).

Group Shows

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

Davis & Langdale
Designs and textiles by Cressida Bell; recent paintings by Kulicke; jewelry by Jamieson; through 12/21. • 231 E. 60th St. (212-838-0333).

★ Markey
Works on paper by Bishop, Frecon, Tuttle, Vyakul, Zeniuk; through 1/18/03. • 42 E. 76th St. (212-517-9892).

★ Salander-O'Reilly
"Italian Sculpture: From the Gothic to the Baroque," sculptures by Bernini, di Camaino, Pisano, della Robbia, Rossellino, others; through 2/1/03. • 20 E. 79th St. (212-879-6606).

Schlesinger
"Outsider Insider," paintings that bring to mind the work of outsider, or untrained, artists, by Blank, Feist, McEneaney; through 1/18/03. • 24 E. 73rd St. (212-734-3600).

Shapolsky
Paintings and sculpture by Evangeline, Groscost, Hunt, Levi, Zogbaum, others; through 2/8/03. • 152 E. 65th St. (212-452-1094).

57th Street Area

★ Adams
"Get in Line," works by Bedia, Dill, Kuitca, Shozawa, Sollins, others; through 12/28. • 41 W. 57th St. (212-644-5665).

★ Clark
"Tea, Blood, and Opium: The Artful Teapot," radical teapot interpretations by Arman, Bennett, DeFazio, Maberry, Takemori, others; through 1/4/03. • 24 W. 57th St. (212-246-2205).

Krugier
Prints by Not Vital; paintings by Michel Haas; sculpture by Yves Dana; through 1/18/03. • 41 E. 57th St. (212-755-7288).

Soho and Tribeca

Cavin-Morris
"Frida's World," photographs of Frida Kahlo by Lola Alvarez Bravo, Imogen Cunningham, Fritz Henle, Leo Matiz, and others, displayed alongside period Mexican jewelry, Tepehuana costumes, and ex-votos and retablos; through 1/4/03 • 560 Broadway (212-226-3768).

★ Deitch
"Session the Bowl," a performance project, the centerpiece of which is a large, wooden, kidney-shaped swimming pool made for skateboarding, by the artist group Simparch, and also featuring works in various media by artists involved in skateboard culture; through 2/1/03. • Deitch, 76 Grand St. (212-343-7300).

Suite 106
"My Father Told Me," works by Alaeff, Cantrell, Feyer, Mulder, others; through 1/11/03. • 112 Mercer St. (212-274-9166).

Chelsea

★ Alexander and Bonin
Sculpture by Bolande, Cole, Hatoum, McBride, Salcedo; through 1/18/03. • 132 Tenth Ave. (212-367-7474).

Broan
Expressionistic works by Agro, Bland, McCarthy, Prulhiere, Van Vliet, others; through 1/11/03 (gallery is closed 12/22–1/1/03). • 4423 W. 14th St. (212-633-6525).

★ Cooper
Paintings from the early sixties by Baer, Judd, Kusama, Warhol, Ryman, others; through 1/11/03. • 534 W. 21st St. (212-255-1105).

Coploff
Works that comprise layers of materials, by Deeton, Enteles, Hoferer; through 1/17/03. • 508 W. 26th St. (212-741-1149).

★ Golden
"The Nature of the Beast," works that explore the transmutability of materials, by Baron, Dawson, Figarella, Muniz, Reeves, Sperber, Twitchell, others; through 1/11/03. • 526 W. 26th St. (212-727-8304).

★ Helman
"Overt Operation," works by Amrhein, Bing, Lombardi, Navarro, Opdyke, Schild; through 1/18/03. • 601 W. 26th St. (212-929-1545).

★ Meltzer
Photographs by Steinfeld; collages and assemblages by Cressman, a video by Plumb; through 1/11/03. • 516 W. 20th St. (212-727-9330).

★ Scott
Works on paper by Goldberg, Leñero, Matino, Salter, Vartanian; through 1/4/03. • 529 W. 20th St. (646-486-7004).

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ADAM BAUMGOLD GALLERY.

Ten in One
"The Undertones," energetic and colorful abstract paintings by Corey, Grabner, Hughes, Rodriguez, Spear, Urkowitz; through 2/1/03. • 526 W. 26th St. (212-604-9660).

★ Thorp
"Aviary," paintings, drawings, sculptures, prints, birdcages, and doorstops related to birds and their habitats, by Avery, Catesby, Cornell, Ernst, Leaf, Michals, Morley, Porter, Steinberg, others; through 1/25/03. • 210 Eleventh Ave. (212-691-6565).

Von Lintel
"Zenroxy," abstract paintings by Bishop, Burton, Dryer, Feeley, Fishman, Hirst, Mueller, Nozkowski, Steir, others; • 555 W. 25th St. (212-242-0599).

White Columns
"Cheap," works made with inexpensive materials by Browder, Brown, Caccioppoli, Creech, Simerly, others; "White Rooms," photographs by Rettig and Cooley; through 1/26/03. • 320 W. 13th St. (212-924-4212).

Photography

★ F & D Cartier
Brilliantly colored photograms by a husband-and-wife team; through 1/11/03. • Milo, 552 W. 24th St. (212-414-0370).

Dan Estabrook
Recent salt prints and calotypes that suggest mysterious events from the past; through 1/11/03. • Morthland, 511 W. 25th St. (212-242-7767).

★ Walker Evans
Duplicate photographs from the collection of the Museum of Modern Art that were printed by Jim Dow under Evans's supervision for the photographer's 1971 MoMA retrospective; through 1/18/03. • Pace/MacGill, 3E. 57th St. (212-759-7999).

Sandi Fellman
Photographs of insects and their shadows; through 1/4/03. • Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. (212-750-7070).

Rena Bass Forman
Romantic sepia-toned landscapes; through 1/11/03. • Winston Wächter Mayer, 39 E. 78th St. (212-327-2526).

★ International Center of Photography
"Weegee's Trick Photography." Distortions of known artworks and caricatures of famous people made from the late forties until the late sixties; through 2/16/03. • "Time of Change: Bruce Davidson, Civil Rights Photographs, 1961–65." Photographs from Davidson's four-year documentation of the movement; through 2/16/03. • "First Photographs: William Henry Fox Talbot and the Birth of Photography." The first major American exhibition to explore the innovations of the British pioneer of photography (1800–1877), including many of the first images to use a negative-to-positive process; through 2/16/03. • 1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000), Tues.-Thurs. 10-5, Fri. 10-8 (5-8 voluntary contribution), Sat. and Sun. 10-6; $9, $6 students and seniors.

★ Kent
"Photography (as commentary)," works by B. N. Adams, D. Adams, Bayer, Burden, Erlich, Haacke, Hamilton, Kennard, Muntadas, Werthein; through 1/25/03. • 67 Prince St. (212-966-4500).

★ Rosemary Laing
Large-scale photographs and a film that investigate flight, technology, and the hyperrealities induced by global air travel; through 1/18/03. • Lelong, 528 W. 26th St. (212-315-0470).

★ Maria Martinez-Cañas/Arne Svensen
Large silver-gelatin prints from the "Hortus" series and small-scale color images from the "Naturalia" series, all of which depict complex arrangements of botanical specimens and other objects from nature/Classically posed portraits of sock monkeys from the collection of Ron Warren. Through 1/11/03. • Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. (212-627-2410).

★ Andew Moore/Lynn Geesaman
Large-scale color photographs of architecture in and around St. Petersburg, Russia/New work. Through 1/25/03. • Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. (6646-230-9610).

★ Gabriel Orozco
Photographs taken on a trip last July to Mali that concentrate on objects, phenomena, erosion, materiality, and the organic; through 1/4/03. • Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (212-977-7160).

Jean Painlevé
Vintage prints from the thirties, by a Surrealist (1902–1989); through 1/11/03. • Cristinerose/Bienvenu, 529 W. 20th St. (212-206-0297).

The Proposition
"Depthography," works that use lenticular imaging techniques by Cook, Jones, Munn; through 1/1/03. • 559 W. 22nd St. (212-242-0035).

★ Throckmorton
Photographs of Peru by Chambi, Algaze, Meinel; through 2/4/03. • 145 E. 57th St. (212-223-1059).

Alexander Tsiaras
Large-format images from the photographer's book, *From Conception to Birth: A Life Unfolds* (Doubleday, 2000), that illustrate human development from single cell to newborn; through 1/4/03. • Ricco Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. (212-627-4819).

Ryan Weideman
Self-portraits and portraits of passengers that the photographer, who is also a cab driver, took in his car over the past two decades; through 1/5/03. • Silverstein, 504 W. 22nd St. (212-627-3930).

★ Neil Winokur
Deadpan photographs of objects set against monochromatic backdrops of the same color; through 12/31. • Borden, 560 Broadway (212-431-0166).

Museums

American Folk Art Museum
★ "American Anthem: Masterworks From the American Folk Art Museum." More than 250 objects from the museum's permanent collection, including paintings, sculpture, quilts, furniture, and pottery; through 1/5/03. • 45 W. 53rd St. (212-265-1040), Tues.-Sun. 10-6 (Fri. to 8); $9, $5 students and seniors.

American Museum of Natural History
★ "Einstein." The most comprehensive exhibition ever mounted on the life and theories of the scientist; through 8/31/03. • ★ "The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter." An annual exhibition, first presented in 1998, of 400 to 500 live tropical butterflies from Central, South, and North America housed in a walk-in vivarium that approximates the butterflies' natural habitat; through 5/26/03. • Central Park West at 79th St. (212-769-5100); daily 10-5:45 (on Fri., Rose Center is open to 8:45 for daily space shows); $12 suggested contribution, $9 students and seniors, $7 children.

Asia Society and Museum
★ "The Native Born: Contemporary Aboriginal Art From Ramingining, Australia." A traveling exhibition of Aboriginal bark paintings, weavings, and wood sculptures organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; through 1/5/03. • "China Refigured: The Art of Ah Xian With Selections From the Rockefeller Collection." Sculptures in porcelain, lacquer, and cloisonné by the Chinese Australian artist; through 2/9/03. • "From Court to Caravan: Chinese Tomb Sculptures From the Collection of Anthony M. Solomon"; through 2/9/03. • 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (212-288-6400), Tues.-Sun. 11-6 (Fri. 11-9, free admission 6-9); $7, $5 students and seniors.

Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts
★ "Le Corbusier Before Le Corbusier: Applied Arts, Architecture, Painting, and Photography." Works made between 1907 and 1922 that show the architect, then a painter, gravitating toward architecture and design; Through 2/23/03. • 18 W. 86th St. (212-501-3000), Tues.-Sun. 11–5 (Thurs. to 8); $3, $2 students and seniors.

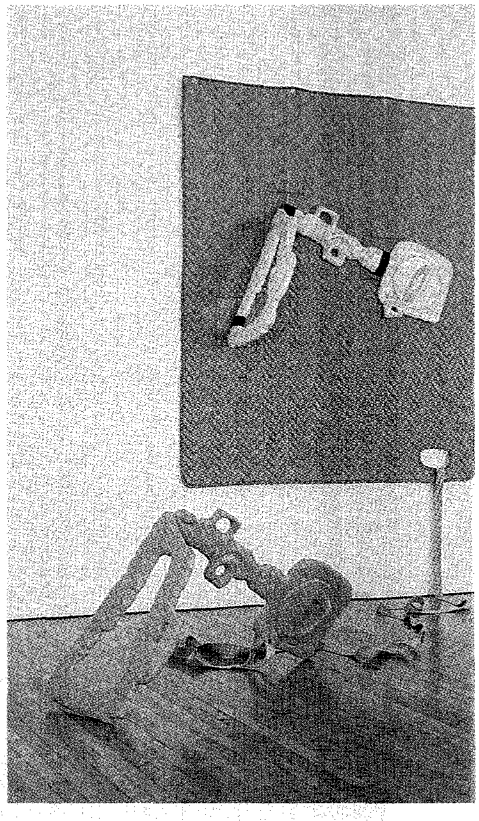
Bronx Museum of the Arts
★ "The Gift: Generous Offerings, Threatening Hospitality." An exhibit organized by Independent Curators International, of works in various media that focus on the giving and receiving of gifts, by 37 artists including Vito Acconci, Louise Bourgeois, Piero Manzoni, Yoko Ono, and Kiki Smith; through 3/2/03. • "Rhythms and Rituals That Feed My Spirit: A Project by Blondell Cummings." An installation using works from the museum's collection; through 3/3/03. • 1040 Grand Concourse, the Bronx (718-681-6000), Wed. noon–9, Thurs.-Sun. noon–6; $5, $3 students and seniors, Wed. free.

Brooklyn Museum of Art
★ "Exposed: The Victorian Nude." The first exhibit to survey the full range of representations of the nude during the reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837 to 1901, including works by Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Edward Burne-Jones, Frederic Leighton, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and others; through 1/5/03. • ★ "The Adventures of Hamza." Approximately 70 of the finest surviving paintings from the *Hamzanama*, a fourteen-volume manuscript portraying the exploits of Amir Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, that was created by Persian and Indian artists and commissioned by the Indian Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) when he was still a teenager;

On View

Play Station

They're not functional, but **Peter Soriano**'s colorful cast-polyester resin sculptures do suggest some-assembly-required toys and various replacement parts you'd find in bins at Home Depot. Several hint at a potential mobility, moreover, like *Wood Is Cozy* (2002), which features two K'nex-like parts—one on a blanket—leashed together with nylon strapping. Batteries not included. (Through January 25; see "Galleries: Solos.")



TOY STORY: Peter Soriano's *Wood Is Cozy*, 2002.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LENNON, WEINBERG, INC.

through 1/26/03. • ★ "Judy Chicago: *The Dinner Party.*" The feminist sculptor's best-known work, given to the museum by the Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation, an installation consisting of a dinner table and 39 place settings representing 39 successful women, executed between 1974 and 1979 by some 400 women working as ceramicists, needleworkers, and china painters; through 2/9/03. • "BAM! BAM! BAM! Catching the NextWave for 20 Years." A multichannel video and sound installation celebrating the twentieth year of the Brooklyn Academy of Music's avant-garde Next Wave festival; through 1/12/03. • 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000), Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. 11–6 (till 11 P.M. on the first Sat. of every month), Sun. 11–6; $6, $3 students and seniors.

Chelsea Art Museum

"Samadhi: The Contemplation of Space. Works by twelve artists whose works suggest spatial openness, among them Allain, Barry, Kuwayama, McLaughlin, Mitchell, and Motherwell; through 3/15/03. • "Shots in the Dark." A survey of crime photography; through 3/15/03. • 556 W. 22nd St. (212-255-0719), Wed.–Sun. noon–6; $5, $2 students and seniors.

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ "New Hotels for Global Nomads." The first major exhibition to explore the hotel as architecture, interior design, and cultural phenomenon; through 3/2/03. • 2 E. 91st St. (212-849-8300), Wed., Thurs., Fri. 10–5, Sat. 10–6, Sun. noon–6, Tues. 10–9 (5–9, free admission); $8, $5 students and seniors.

Dia Center for the Arts

"Rosemarie Trockel: Spleen." A new suite of video projections that explore the meanings of "spleen" through the artist's feminist perspective; through 6/15/03. ★ "Jo Baer: The Minimalist Years, 1960–1975." The artist's first solo museum exhibition in the United States since 1975, of hard-edge minimal paintings and drawings made during the years she lived in New York City; through 6/15/03. • Jorge Pardo and Gerhard Richter: *Refraction.*" The former's design of Dia's ground floor is interwoven with the latter's paintings; through 6/15/03. • "Diana Thater: Knots + Surfaces." A large-scale multiprojection video installation; through 3/29/03. • 548 W. 22nd St. (212-989-5566), Wed.–Sun. noon–6; $6, $3 students and seniors.

Drawing Center

★ "Abstract Tendencies." Abstract works on paper by Bandau, Dudek, Jensen, McShane, Pibal, Song, others; through 12/20. • 35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166), Tues.–Fri. 10–6, Sat. 11–6; donation suggested.

Frick Collection

★ "Masterpieces of European Painting From the Toledo Museum of Art." Twelve important works on loan from the Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, by Piero di Cosimo, Jacopo Bassano, El Greco, Thomas Gainsborough, Camille Pissarro, and others; through 1/5/03. • 1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700); Tues.–Sat. 10–6 (Fri. to 8:45), Sun. 1–6; $12 adults, $8 seniors, $5 students; children under 10 not admitted.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

★ "Moving Pictures." Photographs and video works from the seventies to the present, drawn primarily from the museum's collection, by Marina Abramovic, Vito Acconci, Stan Douglas, Andreas Gursky, Bruce Nauman, and others; through 1/12/03. • ★ "Bill Viola: Going Forth by Day." A new five-part, projected digital image cycle that is experienced architecturally and explores themes of human existence; through 1/12/03. • 1071 Fifth Ave., at 88th St. (212-423-3500), Sat.–Wed. 10–5:45, Fri. 10–8 (Fri. 6–8, pay what you wish), closed Thurs.; $12, $8 students and seniors.

Japan Society

★ "Kazari: Decoration and Display in Japan, Fifteenth–Nineteenth Centuries." A survey of Japanese art that explores the concept and practice of *kazari*, the art of arranging objects and paintings and the principles governing their display, including works gathered from collections around the world; through 12/31. • "Character and Choice: Nikki Lee, Yasumasa Morimura, and Tomoko Sawada." Recent photographs by three artists known for their imaginative exploration of personal metamorphosis; through 1/31/03. • 333 E. 47th St. (212-832-1155), Tues.–Fri. 11–6, Sat. and Sun. 11–5; $5, $3 students and seniors.

Jewish Museum

☆ "Adolph Gottlieb." Paintings spanning the Abstract Expressionist's career from 1934 to 1973 and charting his evolution from his early representational easel paintings to his monumental abstract pictures; through 3/2/03. • ☆ "The City of K.: Franz Kafka and Prague." Photographs, manuscripts, and books set in a series of multimedia environments that place the German-Jewish writer in the context of the city in which he grew up; through 1/5/03. • "Light x Eight: The Hanukkah Project 2002." Works that create or manipulate light, by LaVerdiere, Miyajima, Moss, Parreno, Phillips, Schachter, Veilhan, Villareal; through 2/2/03. • 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (212-423-3200), Mon., Tues., Wed. 11–5:45; Thurs. 11–8 (Thurs. after 5, pay what you wish), Fri. 11–3, Sun. 10–5:45; $8, $5.50 students and seniors.

Metropolitan Museum of Art

☆ "Théodore Chassériau (1819–1856): The Unknown Romantic." The first retrospective of paintings and works on paper since 1933 by this French artist, a precocious disciple of Ingres; through 1/5/03. ☆ "Richard Avedon: Portraits." A retrospective of the preeminent photographer's portraiture, including images of well-known writers, artists, actors, military leaders, and politicians; a series of portraits of his father in the years just prior to his death; and his portrayals of westerners from the series The American West; through 1/5. • ☆ "The Legacy of Ghengis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353." More than 200 objects, including illustrated manuscripts, decorative arts, and architectural decoration; through 2/16/03. • ☆ "Blithe Spirit: The Windsor Set." A collection of French couture donated to the museum in 1946 that includes Chanels, Lanvins, Vionnets, and Schiaparellis, and captures the elegance of thirties café society; through 2/9/03. ★ "The Prints of Vija Celmins." Images of ocean surfaces, desert floors, and star-filled night skies that eschew conventional composition; through 12/29 • "A Very Private Collection: Janice H. Levin's Impressionist Pictures." Some 35 works that graced the late collector's Fifth Avenue apartment, by Bonnard, Monet, Morisot, Pissarro, Renoir, and others; through 2/9/03. • "French Nineteenth-Century Drawings in the Robert Lehman Collection"; through 2/9/02. • "Genesis: Ideas of Origin in African Sculpture." Forty *ci wara* antelope headdresses of the Bamana people, and other masterpieces from across sub-Saharan Africa inspired by distinct myths of origin; through 4/13/03. • "Nomadic Art of the Eastern Eurasian Steppes: The Eugene V. Thaw and Other New York Collections." Works in bronze, gold, and silver, including horse tack and harness fittings, chariot fittings, belt ornaments, weapons, and other objects; through 1/5/03. • "Arts of the Spanish Americas, 1550–1850: Works From the Museum's Collection." A sampling of religious and secular artworks made in colonial Latin America; through 4/6/03. • "Arms and Armor for the Permanent Collection: Notable Acquisitions Since 1991"; through 6/29/03. • "Cityscapes by Klee and Feininger." Cityscapes, real and imaginary, by the two Bauhaus colleagues; through 1/26/03. • • 1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (212-879-5500); Tues.–Thurs. and Sun. 9:30–5:30, Fri. and Sat. 9:30–9; $10 contribution, $5 students and seniors. The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park (212-923-3700); Tues.–Sun. 9:30–4:45 (closes at 5:15 between April and September); $12, $7 students and seniors.

MoMA QNS

★ "Drawing Now: Eight Propositions." Approximately 250 drawings by a diverse group of 26 young artists from Europe, Asia, and the Americas; through 1/6/03. • "The Changing of the Avant-Garde: Visionary Architectural Drawings From the Howard Gilman Collection." 173 architectural drawings of group of 200 that were given to the museum by the Howard Gilman Foundation, by Eisenman, Hejduk, Koolhaas, Maki, Sottsass, others; through 1/6/03. • "Masterworks of German Expressionism." Prints from the museum's collection, by Max Beckmann, Käthe Kollwitz, Ernnst Ludwig Kirchner, Max Pechstein, others; through 2/24/03. • 33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400), Thurs.–Mon. 10–5 (Fri. to 7:45); $12, $8.50 students and seniors.

Morgan Library

☆ "The Thaw Collection: Master Drawings and Oil Sketches, Acquisitions Since 1994." Works collected by Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw since 1994 that they have promised to the Morgan Library, by Carpaccio, Degas, Morandi, Redon, Seurat, and others; through 1/12. • "Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol.*" A special holiday presentation of Dickens's original manuscript; through 1/12/03. • "The Morgan Library-Rienzo Piano Project." Models and plans for the expansion and renovation of the Morgan Library, which will begin on December 4; through 5/4/03. • 29 E. 36th St. (212-685-0008), Tues.–Thurs. 10:30–5, Fri. 10:30–8, Sat. 10:30–6, Sun. noon–6; $8, $6 students and seniors.

☆ El Museo del Barrio

"The (S) Files 2002: The Selected Files." The museum's biennial showcase of works by New York–based Latino and Latin American artists; through 2/16/03. • 1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St. (212-831-7272), Wed.–Sun. 11–5; $5, $3 students and seniors.

Museum for African Art

"Facing the Mask." More than 70 masks from across the continent; through 3/2/03. • "Recent Acquisitions: Selections From the Permanent Collection"; through 3/2/03. • 36-01 43rd Ave. (718-784-7700), Mon., Thurs., Fri. 10–5, Sat. and Sun. 11–6; $5, $2.50 students, seniors, and children.

Museum of Contemporary Arts and Design

"From the Kilns of Denmark: Contemporary Danish Ceramics." A survey of ceramics produced in Denmark since 1982; through 1/5/02. • "Elegant Fantasy: The Jewelry of Arline Fisch." A survey of the jewelry artist's collars and body ornaments, which incorporate such textile techniques as weaving and crochet; through 1/5/03. • "September 11: Artists Respond." More than 60 works in fiber, wood, glass, metal, clay, and other mediums made by artists across the country in response to the events of September 11, 2001; through 1/5/03. • 40 W. 53rd St. (212-956-3535), daily 10–6, Thurs. 10–8 (pay what you wish 6–8); $7.50, $4 students and seniors.

Museum of Jewish Heritage

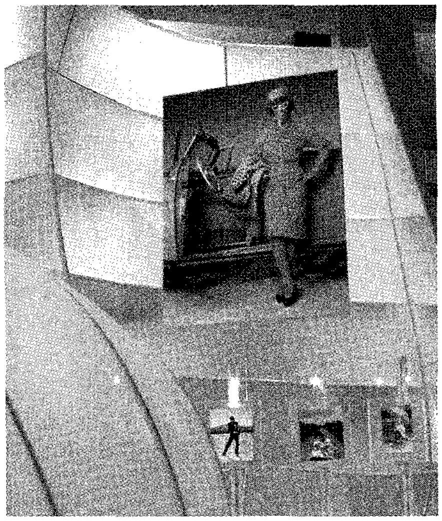
"Yahrzeit." A selection of photographs and artifacts relating to the World Trade Center attack in observance of its first anniversary; through 1/5/02. • 18 First Place, Battery Park City (212-968-1800), Sun.–Wed 10–5:45, Thurs. 10–8, Fri. and the eve of Jewish holidays 10–3; $7, $5 students and seniors.

Museum of Sex

"NYC Sex: How New York City Transformed Sex in America." The museum's inaugural exhibition, charting New York City's histories of prostitution, "white slavery," birth control, fetish, sexual freedom, and more; through 7/3/03. • 233 Fifth Ave., at 27th St. (212-689-6337), Sun., Mon., Tues., Thurs. 10–6:30, Fri. and Sat. 10–9; $17 (only those 18 and older will be admitted).

Museum of the City of New York

"Horn & Hardart's Automat." Photographs, ephemera, and artifacts—including original Horn & Hardart furniture and vending machines—demonstrating the chain's important place in New York's culture; through 3/16. • "The Croton Aqueduct: Illustrations by Fayette B. Tower." Highlights from a recent gift to the museum of ink drawings, prints, and letters by Fayette B. Tower (1817–1857), an assistant engineer on the Croton Aqueduct project; through 4/6/03. • "The Lubavitch of Brooklyn, An Intimate Portrait: Photographs by Steve Hoffman." Images documenting the daily life and rituals of the Jewish Chabad Lubavitch community in Crown Heights, Brooklyn; through 2/2/03. • "Raíces: The Roots of Latin Music in New York City." Photographs, broadsides, posters, instruments, and costumes relating to the evolution of Latin music in New York in the twentieth century; through 1/26/05. • ★ "Richard Rodgers' Broadway." A centennial celebration of the legendary composer's birth, featuring photographs, sheet music, personal items, and ephemera from the museum's Theater Collection; through 1/5/03. • "The Day Our World Changed: Children's Art of 9/11." Eighty-three works of art made by New York area children in response to the events of September 11, 2001; through 1/19/03. • 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (212-534-1672), Wed.–Sat. 10–5, Sun. 1–5; $5 suggested contribution, $4 students and seniors.



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Museum of the Fashion Institute of Technology
★ "Scaasi: Exuberant Fashion." A selection of 70 evening gowns and cocktail dresses by the designer known for his use of rich, opulently adorned fabrics, off-the-shoulder necklines, and strapless dresses; through 1/4/03. • ★ "Femme Fatale: Fashion and Visual Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris." The first exhibition to explore the sexual politics of women's fashion in turn-of-the-century Paris, where courtesans and actresses set the latest styles, including fashions by Doucet, Pacquin, Worth, and others; through 1/25/03. • Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (212-217-7642), Tues.-Fri. noon-8, Sat. 10-5; free.

National Academy of Design
★ "Color & Ecstacy: The Art of Hyman Bloom." A retrospective of paintings and drawings by a Latvian-born artist who had his first retrospective at the Whitney Museum in 1954 and whose work reflected his preoccupations with light, color, the macabre, and spirituality; through 12/29. • 1083 Fifth Ave., at 89th St. (212-369-4880), Wed. and Thurs. noon-5, Fri. , Sat. and Sun. 11-6; $8; $4.50 students and seniors.

National Museum of the American Indian
"The Edge of Enchantment." A multimedia presentation of the ceremonial landscapes, histories, lives, and traditions of contemporary Native communities of the Huatulco-Huamelula region of Oaxaca, Mexico; through 8/31. • "The New Old World: Antilles—Living Beyond the Myth." Photographs of the Taino and Carib peoples of the Caribbean by Marisol Villanueva; through 3/21/03. • ★ "Great Masters of Mexican Folk Art From the Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex." Works by contemporary master craft artists from all 31 states of the Mexican Republic; through 3/15/03. • 1 Bowling Green (212-514-3700), 10-5 daily, Thurs. 10-8; free.

Neue Galerie
★ "Dagobert Peche and the Wiener Werkstätte." The first comprehensive exhibit of drawings, furniture, jewelry, ceramics, fabrics, and wallpaper by the eclectic Viennese designer (1887–1923); through 2/10/03. • 1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200), Fri. 11-9, Sat., Sun., Mon. 11-6; $10, $7 students and seniors.

New Museum of Contemporary Art
★ "Carroll Dunham." The first major museum survey of paintings by the American artist whose combination of biomorphism, cartooning, and abstraction have played a pivotal role in synthesizing abstraction with representation; through 2/2/03. • 583 Broadway, near Prince St. (212-219-1222), Tue.-Sun. noon-6, Thurs. noon-8 ($3 admission Thurs. 6-8); $6, $3 students and seniors.

New York Public Library
★ "New York Eats Out." Menus, photographs, prints, magazine covers, and other items chronicling the history of New York dining from the collection of the library and on loan from the private holdings of restaurateurs, chefs, and others, selected by the New York *Times* food critic William Grimes; through 3/1. • ★ "Urban Neighbors: Images of New York City Wildlife." Historic and contemporary illustrated books, photographs, engravings, maps, original art, and other works from the library's collections depicting fauna from the five boroughs; through 2/1/03. • ★ "A Legacy in Landscapes." Arcadian images from the library's Print Collection dating from the sixteenth century to 2001, by Castiglione, Fragonard, Dalí, Katz, Pissarro, Munch, others; through 1/4/03. • Fifth Ave. and 42nd St. (212-869-8089), Tues. and Wed. 11-7:30, Thurs.-Sat. 10-6; free.

New-York Historical Society
★ "Portrait of the Art World: A Century of *ARTnews* Photographs." A celebration of the centenary of America's oldest art magazine through a selection of 100 of its most memorable portraits of artists; through 1/5/03. • ★ "Freedom: A History of US." An exhibition pairing original broadsides, manuscripts, and imprints from the Gilder Lehrman Collection with archival photographs from the Meserve-Kunhardt Collection; through 1/26/03. • ★ "New York Diary: The Collages of John Evans." Collages made daily by the artist in his diary from the early sixties through December 31, 2000; through 3/9/03. (See box.) • "Gouverneur Morris Treasures." Objects, furniture, and correspondence given to the New-York Historical Society after the statesman's death in 1816; through 1/20/03. • ★ "The Games We Played: American Board and Table Games From the Liman Collection." More than 150 examples of board games dating from the end of the Civil War through the first decade of the twentieth century; through 1/5/03. • 2 W. 77th St. (212-873-3400); Tues.-Sun. 11-6; $5, $3 seniors and children.

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center
★ "Video Acts: Single-Channel Works From the Collections of Pamela and Richard Kramlich and New Art Trust." Performance-based artworks in video format by Ambramovic and Ulay, Vito Acconci, Gilbert and George, Jonas, Nauman, Paik, Viola, Wegman, others; through 4/30/03. • ★ "Building Structures." Artworks made from wood, cardboard, plastic, plywood, plaster, and other building materials, by Cape, Guyton, McBride, Schnitger, Tse, Weiner, others; through 1/31/03. • "Arnold Mesches: FBI Files." Collages and paintings about the artist's own experiences during the Depression, World War II, the Cold War, the McCarthy "Red Scare" era; through 2/28/03. • 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084), Thurs.-Mon. noon-6; $5 suggested donation.

Studio Museum in Harlem
★ "Gary Simmons." A survey of the artist's work from the past seven years, including erasure drawings, photographs, sculptures, and videos; through 1/5/03. • 144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500), Wed., Thurs., Sat., and Sun. noon-6, Fri. noon-8; $5, $3 students and seniors.

Whitney Museum of American Art
★ "The Quilts of Gee's Bend." Approximately 70 quilts made between the twenties and the nineties by the women of Gee's Bend, a small town in rural Alabama; through 3/2/03. • ★"An American Legacy, A Gift." Eighty-seven works of postwar American art that were given to the museum by fifteen members of its board of trustees, including works by Close, De Feo, Frankenthaler, Johns, Kelly, Kline, Newman, Pollock, Rauschenberg, Rothko, Ryman, Twombly, and Warhol; through 1/26/03. • ★ "Lorna Simpson: *31*." A film installation that tracks a month in the life of an unknown woman in a grid of 31 small video screens as she moves through her apartment, the street, the office, and various recreational spaces; through 1/26/03. "Lorna Simpson: Cameos and Appearances." New photographs from an ongoing series of silhouetted and obscured portraits; through 1/26/03. • ★ "Sanctuaries: The Last Works of John Hejduk." Drawings and models by the visionary American architect who was the dean of Cooper Union for 25 years and who explored an allegorical, carnivalesque mode of architecture; through 1/5/03. • "Tom Burr: *Deep Purple.*" A re-imagining of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* that calls into question the past, present, and future of public art; through 1/5/03. • "Ben Rubin and Mark Hansen: Listening Post." An installation exploring the content, scale, and immediacy of communication on the Internet; through 3/9/03. • 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St. (212-570-3676); Tues.-Thurs., Sat., Sun. 11-6, Fri. 1-9 (pay what you wish every Fri. 6-9); $12, $9.50 students, seniors, and groups of fifteen or more.

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris
★ "Outer City, Inner Space: Teresita Fernandez, Stephen Hendee, and Esther Partegas." New site-specific sculptural works by three artists who explore architectural and conceptual space; through 1/3/03. • "Haluk Akakçe: Illusion of the First Time." An ethereal environment of illusional wall paintings, abstract video projections, and dimensional sound elements; through 1/10/03. • 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (917-663-2550), Mon.-Fri. 11-6 (Thurs. till 7:30); free.

Auctions

Christie's
12/18 at 10: "Fine European and Oriental Carpets." On view from 12/13. 12/18 at 2: "Important Botanical Books From the Massachusetts Horticultural Society." On view from 12/13. 12/19 at 10 and 2: "Printed Books and Manuscripts." On view from 12/14. 12/20 at 10 and 2: "Entertainment Memorabilia Including the Bobby Zarem Collection." On view from 12/15. • 20 Rockefeller Plaza (212-636-2000).

cue

Restaurants

Edited by Robin Raisfeld
& Rob Patronite

New and Noteworthy

Acqua Pazza
Umberto Arpaia, executive chef and owner of the nearby Cellini, has turned the old Artusi space into a restaurant devoted to coastal Italian cuisine. Smartly refurbished with slate tiles, dark wood, and an espresso-and-milk color scheme, Acqua Pazza offers a small menu supplemented by market-dependent seafood specials. The name means "crazy water," and refers to the traditional southern-Italian practice of cooking a whole fish in seawater. Arpaia bakes his instead, sanely, in a broth of cherry tomatoes, chili flakes, and white wine. • 36 W. 52nd St. (212-582-6900). (M–E)

★ Aix
It took only the turn of a key for Aix to become hotter than Dennis Quaid's stolen kiss in *Far From Heaven*. Yet, unlike Tom Valenti's big-hearted bistro cuisine at nearby Ouest, chef Didier Virot's precise counterpoint cooking in this ingeniously laid-out neo-brownstone does little to play to the locals. None are leaving appearing the least bit slighted. And after you savor Virot's tomato tart perfumed with basil and Parmesan and foie gras in pear coulis, neither will you. • 2398 Broadway, at 88th St. (212-874-7400). (M–E)

Cafe Kai
At this tiny health-food café and garden, the emphasis is on liquid assets like fresh-squeezed juices, smoothies, and West Indian–inspired ginger and sorrel brews. Eat all your vegetables—or a spelt pita stuffed with hummus or ginger-and-peanut-marinated tofu—and reward yourself with a plantain tart or a slice of sweet-potato bread. • 151 Smith St., near Bergen St., Boerum Hill, Brooklyn (718-596-3466). (I) ($)

Cocotte
The Park Slope sibling of Fort Greene's popular Loulou has a romantic, candlelit vibe, a charming Breton hostess, and a kitchen that skirts bistro boredom with offbeat selections like shrimp-stuffed artichokes and duck-confit-salad pizza. Menus are presented on old French album covers and the check arrives in a dish of jelly beans, flourishes sure to please the D.J. and the toddler in your party. • 337 Fifth Ave., at 4th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-832-6848). (M) ($)

★ Crispo
After two decades as a New York chef-for-hire, Frank Crispo has finally landed an open kitchen of his own, where he's serving up delicious Italian-Mediterranean fare like mint-braised artichokes, grilled pizzas, and a sliced hanger steak that puts most French bistros to shame (even minus the frites). The cozy room, the friendly service, and the gentle prices make this place a terrific addition to the neighborhood, but we'd come back for Frank's plate of lovingly sliced prosciutto alone. • 240 W. 14th St. (212-229-1818). (M)

CurryShop
Named for the cast-iron pan it's cooked in and served traditionally with nan bread instead of cutlery, the Birmingham balti has become as inherently British as fish and chips. So it makes perfect sense that expat Christopher Sell would open the CurryShop directly next door to his ChipShop, advancing his one-man British invasion of Park Slope. The mix-and-match menu offers a range of sauces, from korma to vindaloo, and Anglo appetizers like coronation chicken salad. • 383 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-832-7701). (M) ($)

Dos Caminos
Stephen Hanson has made a habit—and a successful career—out of opening big, bold, budget-conscious restaurants. In this case, he adds margaritas and all sorts of assiduously researched Mexican fare to the mix. With 150 tequilas, 275 seats, and a south-of-the-border design scheme, he aims to spice up the state of Manhattan Mexican, from the humblest taco to the most complex mole. • 373 Park Avenue So., nr. 27th St. (212-294-1000). (M–E)

★ Fresh
After supplying fresh fish to star chefs like Alain Ducasse and Gray Kunz, the owners of Early Morning Seafood have opened a Tribeca restaurant of their own, turning their clients into the competition. Former Gotham chef de cuisine Martin Burge makes the most of getting first dibs on the day's catch with lightly crunchy fried Ipswich clams, melting "Kobe beef" of bluefin toro, and an array of "prime cuts" like baby-back halibut ribs steamed in kelp. • 105 Reade St. (212-406-1900). (E)

General Store
Everything on the menu, from the Wisconsin cheese in the ham sandwich to the Maine lobster in the potpie, is American in origin at this combination restaurant–bar–ice-cream parlor–flower shop–bakery, where world-weary Manhattanites pledge culinary allegiance to an idealized version of middle America. Wash it all down with twelve American beers on tap and 30 American wines by the glass. • 29 Ave. B (212-254-0055). (M)

★ Gonzo
Chef-owner Vincent Scotto's cooked his way downtown, from Fresco to Scopa to this Village brownstone, where he's serving classics culled from his Italian-American repertoire like grilled-onion salad, Venetian-style bar snacks called cicchetti, salumi and cheese plates, and hearty entrées and sides meant to be shared. Don't miss his unbelievably great grilled pizzas topped with everything from cumin-scented ricotta to mashed potatoes. • 140 W. 13th St. (212-645-4606). (M)

Preview

Carb Your Enthusiasm

Score one for carbohydrates. In a bold, blood-sugar-plummeting move, the enticing menu at **Perbacco**, opening soon in the East Village, reads like a greatest-starchy-hits list of regional Italian cooking. From the familiar (polenta, pizza, and piadina) to the not so (panzerotti, erbazzone, and tigelle, an old Modenese mountain hearth cake, meant to be eaten here with cheese, salumi, and even Nutella), it's an anti-Atkins manifesto. Owner Pierluigi Palazzo, who also runs the terrific restaurant Gnocco, rounds things out with a few pure proteins like grilled lamb skewers all'abruzzese, Parmigiano-Reggiano drizzled with 24-year-old balsamic vinegar, an all-Italian wine list, and five daily specials—which, we're betting, will include a pasta or two. (234 East 4th Street; 212-253-2038.)

IN FULL FLOUR: Bread and beyond at Perbacco.

Ground Rules These listings are a selective guide to the city's restaurants, some *New York* advertisers among them. Stars (✩) indicate our critics' recommendations. The price guide, admittedly imperfect, is as follows: (E) = expensive; (M) = moderate; (I) = inexpensive. Restaurants listed accept all major credit cards, except where noted; ($) = cash only; "AE only" indicates that American Express is the only accepted card.

★ L'Impero
We can't imagine a better upscale Italian-food bargain than Scott Conant's $48 four-course prix fixe at this sophisticated new Tudor City restaurant, where he synthesizes elegance and rusticity in dishes like duck-and-foie gras agnolotti and roast baby goat. Vicente Wolf (also a partner) is responsible for the polished, roomy design, and managing partner Chris Cannon masterminded the user-friendly wine list, which offers great values on daily-changing house carafes. • 45 Tudor City Pl. (212-599-5045). (E)

O Mai
First there was the East Village smash hit Cyclo. Then came Nam, the Tribeca triumph, which has in turn spawned a Chelsea outpost that aspires to the Vietnamese chainlet's winning formula of fresh, affordable food and stylishly understated décor. The kitchen reprises classics like wok-seared monkfish and lemongrass-crusted tofu, all done with characteristic delicacy and a knack for clear, vibrant flavors. • 158 Ninth Ave., near 19th St. (212-633-0550). (M)

★ Pazo
AZ's sister restaurant does for coastal Mediterranean cuisine what its precursor did for Asian fusion—reinvents it with a creative American spin. The menu features house-smoked bacon and chorizo, newfangled surf and turf, and witty variations on familiar themes like vitello tonnato of tuna carpaccio and harissa-braised veal shank; the vaguely Moorish redesign of the former Sono space is equally whimsical. • 106 E. 57th St. (212-752-7470). (M–E)

★ Sciuscià
The younger, loungier sequel to Il Gattopardo brings some of its predecessor's Southern Italian signatures to a subterranean space below the Hotel Giraffe. But besides sautéed escarole and Neapolitan meat loaf, the broad Mediterranean menu makes room for a terrific kibbeh appetizer, a Córdoba salad, and, at lunch, a $22.50 daily changing *piatto unico*, or European-style bento box. • 365 Park Ave. So., at 26th St. (212-213-4008). (M–E)

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CARINA SALVI.

★ Sparky's American Food
Reformed dot-commer Brian Benavidez sourced the best ingredients he could find before opening this fast-food frankfurter joint in a converted Williamsburg warehouse. He uses Ronnybrook ice cream for milkshakes and organic Cheddar for cheese fries. But his Niman Ranch all-beef hot dog is the thing, and he serves it a dozen or so ways, with everything from homemade ketchup to coleslaw and bacon. And the name? "Sparky's my dog," he says. We suspected as much. • 135-A N. 5th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-302-5151). (I) ($)

The Steakhouse at Fairway
It's BYO, and almost cheaper than eating at home. Start with a fine Caesar and a crock of exceptional onion soup. The steak—strip, filet, or rib-eye—is cooked as requested (though a bit bland for prime dry-aged, as billed). Savvy locals arrive with great Burgundies from their own cellars, and host and patron Mitchel London strides the room making sure everyone has enough to eat—a lot like Mom. • 2127 Broadway, at 74th St. (212-595-1888). (M)

Shopping

Couture Confiture

Though olives are normally preserved with salt, why not try sugar for a change? Such was the thinking behind chef Jean-Marie Meulien's **Confiture d'Olives,** created for his Provençal restaurants Table d'Olivier. Made from black and green olives, apples, honey, lemon juice, olive oil, and aromatic herbs, the jam was so popular that he started producing it commercially. Will jaded New York palates be a little suspicious? "I thought olive jam was going to be a bit odd, but when I tasted it, I was intrigued by its sweet earthiness," says Rick Moonen, chef owner of RM and Branzini. "We have been conditioned to eat olives a certain way." Our taste suggests serving it with crêpes and pancakes, sheep's-milk cheese, foie gras, any kind of white meat, or even lemon sorbet and ice cream; Moonen is planning a quenelle of olive confiture with a gravlax of arctic char and onion toast. ($12 for a 4.6-ounce jar, at Oliviers & Co.'s three stores: Grand Central Terminal; 249 Bleecker Street; and 198 Columbus Avenue, at 69th Street; 877-828-6620.) GILLIAN DUFFY

IN A JAM: Confiture d'Olives, at Oliviers & Co.

Confiture d'Olives Noires & Vertes
Black & Green Olive Jam
OLIVIERS & CO

Terrance Brennan's
Dairy king Terrance Brennan has filled the void Larry Forgione left when he checked out of the Benjamin hotel. In a modern twist on the traditional chop house, meat and seafood are accessorized with your choice of sauces and butters; even the salt-baked potato comes with a condiment tray. Prime rib and chateaubriand for two are carved tableside. Plus flaky gougeres, onion soup, and cheeses straight from Artisanal's cave. • 565 Lexington Ave., at 50th St. (212-715-2400). (E)

Voyage
The rum-soaked former premises of Caribe have been aired out, spruced up, and graced with a modern American menu that borrows liberally from the southern and Latin American larders in a full-fat (but quite refined) attack of baby back ribs, fried baby chicken with pickled okra, curried fried oysters, and roast pork with ham-hock-stuffed plantains. Other southern comforts: a tea lounge up front and boiled peanuts at the bar. • 117 Perry St. (212-255-9191). (M-E)

Whim
From the makeshift oyster bar fashioned from a stainless-steel glass rack and a shower curtain to the owner who also cooks, waits tables, and shucks oysters, this Cobble Hill restaurant has a winning homespun feel about it. The loosely organized, mostly seafood menu encourages free-form ordering, be it a plate of remarkably fresh Belons or a three-course meal. Lemon-poppy-seed-banana-bread pudding made from the morning's muffins will make you want to come back for breakfast. • 243 DeGraw St., Cobble Hill, Brooklyn (718-797-2017). (M)

Manhattan

Lower New York

★ Alias Restaurant
The owners of 71 Clinton Fresh Food and aKa Cafe have tripled their presence on the block with this casually sophisticated bistro. It's closer to 71 in food and mood, and offers top-notch service, a quirky wine list, and an equally inventive menu featuring dishes like skate fish cakes, a chicken-fried portobello, a flawless hanger steak, and, in tribute to a fading Lower East Side industry, a pickle-plate appetizer. • 76 Clinton St. (212-505-5011). (M)

★ Balthazar
Keith McNally has countless pacesetting restaurants to his credit, but this is his masterpiece, an evocation of a Paris brasserie that outglows anything within Brie-tossing distance of the Seine. Yet for all its visual impact, Balthazar boasts equally compelling fare: tender braised lamb shoulder gets served over garganelli pasta, shepherd's pie is made with duck, grilled tuna floats over tomato-and-saffron coulis. And its oyster bar, short ribs, bread, and service make you not give a damn whether you ever see the Eiffel Tower. • 80 Spring St. (212-965-1414). (M)

Delmonico's
Eat with the Big Boys at this sprawling, beautifully restored New York City icon. Start the feast the way Diamond Jim would have, with oysters Rockefeller and clams Casino, and end it with baked Alaska; in between there's lobster Newburg, rack of lamb, and, of course, the classic Delmonico's steak. And don't forget your jacket—or your wallet. • 56 Beaver St. (212-509-1144). (E)

★ Fried Dumpling
It's all about the Washingtons at this starchy storefront dumpling dive: Nearly every item on the menu is $1 or less. But come payday, do what we do: Slap a Lincoln on the counter and ask for five expertly fried pork-and-chive-stuffed dumplings ($1); four chubby mini pork buns ($1); and a thick sesame pancake wedge layered with a chewy slice of beef ($1.50). Wash it down with a $1 Snapple and don't forget your 50 cents' change. • 99 Allen St. (212-941-9975). (I)

★ The Harrison
With its long, bustling bar, commodious beamy interior, and friendly neighborhood vibe, the Red Cat's Jimmy Bradley and Danny Abrams's hot spot feels like it's been part of the local landscape for years. There are all sorts of dining options—you can spend a week snarfing the spicy fries—but we like the big dishes best: the crispy chicken served on a fat mattress of scallion mashed potatoes, calf's liver smothered in a sweet sherry sauce, and the house shell steak drizzled with crisps of pancetta. • 355 Greenwich St. (212-274-9310). (M)

★ Omen
The most singularly uncommon Japanese meal you can clear your senses with is to be found at this rustic home to Kyoto-style country cooking. The food looks coarse—little bowls with mackerel and daikon radish, or a quail egg oozing over a chunk of toro—and the first swallow is likely to be eerie and sharp. But the aftertaste provokes instantaneous acceptance followed by a craving for more. • 113 Thompson St. (212-925-8923). (M-E) AE only

★ Savoy
A relative dinosaur in Soho's volatile restaurant scene, this warm, cozy retreat is a reliable refuge from the lower-Broadway swarm. With its woody décor and its pair of fireplaces, it's got an urban-rustic charm and a Mediterranean-inspired, hyperseasonal menu, which has recently been tweaked to emphasize small plates of charcuterie and vegetable antipasto available all day at the newly built downstairs bar. • 70 Prince St. (212-219-8570). (M-E)

Tja!
Why cross Scandinavian (specifically Swedish) cuisine with Asian (specifically Japanese)? "We both eat from the ocean," says owner Bjorn Moller, "and we both have a similar sense of design and space." The space in question is the old Barocco, painted burgundy and outfitted with mohair seats and a towering steel bar. • 301 Church St. (212-226-8900). (M)

Below 14th Street, East

★ Five Points
Every neighborhood needs a place with a good bar, a serious kitchen, and zero pretensions. NoHo has one in this Med-American restaurant, where a split log running down the center of the dining room conveys a babbling brook. Zen though that may sound, chef Marc Meyer's hearty cooking is bold and passionate. Duck-and-foie gras sausage and wood-oven roasted Magret duck show enough spikiness to make you look down and go "hmmm" before you go back to the conversation. • 31 Great Jones St. (212-253-5700). (M)

★ Frank
With its kinetic open kitchen, its laconic waitstaff, and its cramped, thrift-shop furniture, Frank is where red-sauce specialist Frank Prisinzano launched his budget-Italian East Village empire. No matter the hour, it's full of hungry hipsters looking to fill up on Grandma Carmela's slow-cooked ragù, Uncle Michael's medicine ball of a meatloaf, and great bruschetta al pomodoro (when it comes to sourcing out-of-season tomatoes, Frank must be connected). • 88 Second Ave. (212-420-0106). (I-M)

industry (food)
What do you get when you mix a chef who worked for Jean-Louis Palladin and Jean-Georges Vongerichten, bartenders and managers from Bungalow 8 and BondSt, and a treehouse-for-grown-ups rustic design? An instant hot spot, judging by the crowds getting back to nature in this wood-paneled rec room. Chef

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TINA RUPP.

Alex Freij offers bistro fare (mussel stew, grilled skate wing, braised short rib) at neighborhood-friendly prices. • 509 E. 6th St. (212-777-5920). (M)

Osso Buco
Popular Italian restaurant on a much-traveled Village corridor serving family-style portions of the eponymous house specialty, Caesar salad, fried calamari, and T-bone steak. • 88 University Pl. (212-645-4525). Also, 1662 Third Ave., at 93rd St. (426-5422). (M)

★ **Patio Dining**
Sara Jenkins cooks with the seasons and shops at the Greenmarket, which makes her small daily menu fresh, unpredictable, and Chez Panissean in spirit—think Jonathan Waxman's Washington Park on a tiny East Village restaurant budget. Earthy, comforting soups; rich, veggie-strewn pastas; boutique free-range pork and veal; and fresh, expertly cooked fish sound simple but are elevated by first-rate ingredients—even the doctored house olive oil makes a bold, aromatic statement. • 31 Second Ave. (212-460-9171). (M)

★ **Rai Rai Ken**
If you're nearsighted and have the option, wear contact lenses to this narrow fourteen-stool ramen bar. Otherwise—especially in winter—the fragrant heat pouring off soup cauldrons large enough to impress Macbeth's witches will seriously steam up your eyeglasses. Then all your senses won't be able to fully appreciate the tremendous bowls of ramen noodles in flavorful broths chock-full of various delicacies, like fish cakes, roast pork, bamboo shoots, and crispy garlic. • 214 E. 10th St. (212-477-7030). (I) ($)

Below 14th Street, West

★ **A Salt & Battery**
A fish-and-chips shop that literally reeks of authenticity: Aside from the main attraction, properly wrapped in British newspaper, there are mushy peas, pickled onions, and the improbably edible deep-fried Mars Bars, all deftly executed by a wisecracking fry chef who used to cook in the British Merchant Navy, and then, judging by his hoop earrings, pantaloons, and Errol Flynn beard, must have turned pirate. • 112 Greenwich Ave. (212-691-2713). (I-M)

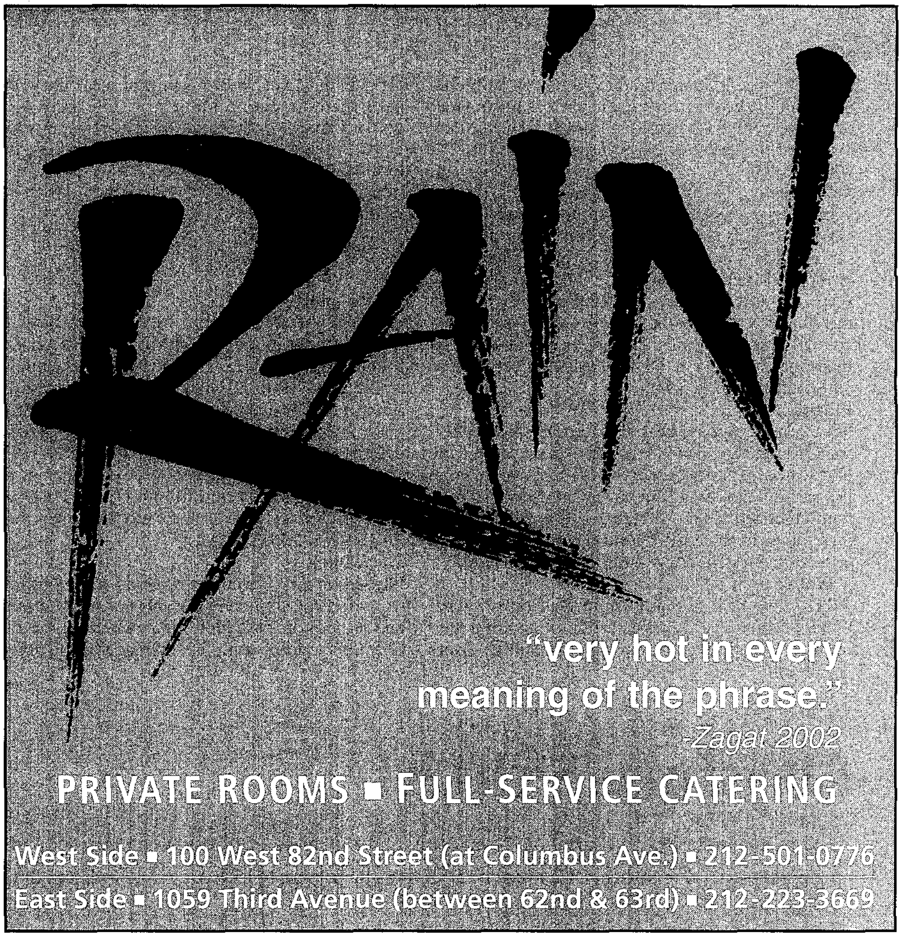
Alfama
The family-reunion feel of the welcome you receive when you set foot inside this cozy corner of Portugal in the Village sets the mood. And, the kitchen seals the deal with authentic dishes like a luscious seafood mariscada, codfish soufflé, and an oddly delicious shellfish bread pudding with tiger prawns. Bonus points for an interesting Portuguese wine list and live fado music on Wednesdays. • 551 Hudson St. (212-645-2500). (M-E)

★ **Babbo**
Ever try goat cheese tortellini dusted in dried orange and wild fennel pollen? Or spicy lamb sausage romanced by mint love letters and a paste of sweet peas? Get ready to crave them. Mario Batali's original yet airy Italian cooking will stun, fool, bewitch, and ultimately obsess you. Just get it together to make another reservation before you leave. • 110 Waverly Pl. (212-777-0303). (E)

Burrito Loco
The house burrito comes with three sauces and a choice of beef, pork, or chicken. There's a rendition stuffed with roasted lamb and lots of vegetarian options. And even though it could probably survive just by serving the hordes of marauding college students nachos and tacos, the festive cantina keeps things interesting with cactus salad and shrimp seviche. • 166 W. 4th St. (212-675-1977). (I-M)

★ **Inside**
The trick to dining at Anne Rosenzweig's comfortable, cut-rate sequel to Arcadia and Lobster Club is to somehow avoid the delectably lethal bar snacks like bacon-wrapped dates, fried oysters, and a grilled cheddar-and-ramp sandwich. That way, you can savor chef-co-owner Charleen Badman's seasonally inspired salads, homemade pastas, and charismatic comfort food, like roast chicken with spaetzle and "lilies" (a lyrical and botanically correct name for onions, garlic, and shallots). • 9 Jones St. (212-229-9999). (M)

★ **Pearl Oyster Bar**
Milos may have a fish display as big as this joint's entire counter, but nothing can match this kitchen's



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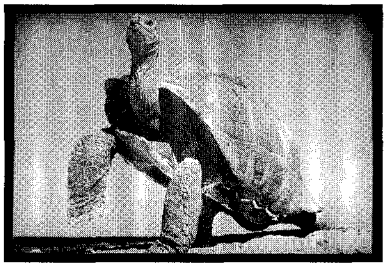

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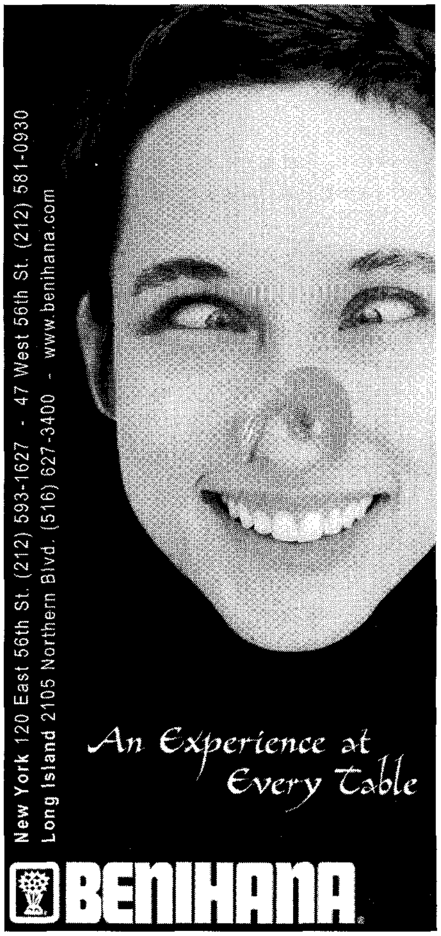

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preparatory skills. Keep your elbows in and your chin down, all the better to acknowledge a clam chowder revved up with bacon, mussels in mustard cream, and a nutty grilled pompano in herbs. • 18 Cornelia St. (212-691-8211). (M)

Tio Pepe

Can't decide between Mexican and Spanish? This Greenwich Village kitchen has been doling out both for over three decades, and to judge by the liquor supply, the bar's been stocking a new brand of tequila every year. That sort of variety contributes to the general merriment, as do a heaping paella Valenciana and bicultural tapas like garlic shrimp and nachos, which many seem to enjoy in the skylit garden room. • 168 W. 4th St. (212-242-9338). (I–M)

Village

After years of pushing steak-frites at places like Odeon and Quatorze, Stephen Lyle has more than mastered the bistro idiom. At Village, Lyle widens his range in dishes like shrimp-and-lentil samosas and an oyster pan roast with chipotles; for more buttoned-down bistro tastes there's a warm frisée salad, steak au poivre and potatoes sauteed in duck fat. • 62 W. 9th St. (212-505-3355). (M)

★ Wallsé

Who knew veal goulash could be elegant? Kurt Gutenbrunner's version is an artful mound of tender meat you almost regret toppling. And though dishes like tafelspitz and wiener schnitzel seem like a culinary memoir, the guiding principle here is less goulash than Greenmarket. Local farmers supply Gutenbrunner with lemon thyme for his pike, heirloom tomatoes for his lamb salad, and the sweet strawberries that garnish his elderflower sorbet. • 344 W. 11th St. (212-352-2300). (M–E)

14th–42nd Streets, East Side

★ Artisanal

If cheese is a religion, this is its bustling, Balthazar-gone-midtown house of worship. After an olfactory assault at the door, where you're hit with the pungent aroma of Muenster, Taleggio, and 200 other varieties aging gracefully in the boutique cheese cave, indulge in full-fromage festivities from appetizer (raclette pizza) to dessert (a splendid tarte Tatin with a cheese-infused crust.) If you manage to resist a dozen different fondues, there's a full menu of bistro classics like braised lamb shank, boudin blanc, and cassoulet. • 2 Park Ave., at 32nd St. (212-725-8585). (M–E)

Black Duck

Named for a rum-running boat and owned by a hotel-and-cruise-ship company, this tavernesque restaurant at the Park South Hotel understandably goes overboard on seafood dishes like lobster martini, porcini-and-herb-crusted salmon in pastry, and sushi-style sesame-seared tuna. The "black duck" is pepper-crusted magret cooked with the proprietary house rum. • 122 E. 28th St. (212-204-5240). (M)

★ Blue Smoke

Forget what the 'cue quibblers say—Blue Smoke is an ingenious Manhattan barbecue joint with a woody barroom full of red-vinyl booths, a skylit dining room, and a hot jazz club downstairs. True, some of the barbecue isn't there yet, but each visit shows improvement, as pit master Kenny Callaghan breaks in those Missouri-made smokers. Salt-and-pepper beef ribs are terrific; so are sides and desserts, and as far as pit-smoked foie gras and salmon goes, what's the problem? This ain't East Treestump, Texas, after all. • 116 E. 27th St. (212-447-7733). (M)

★ Campagna

The far-too-cautious interior is woefully inappropriate preparation for the whoops of joy that erupt when patrons sample Mark Strausman's gleefully game sense of Italian cuisine. The lobster broth in his cacciucco is a blast. And his grandma's lasagna makes you sorry you never met her. • 24 E. 21st St. (212-460-0900). (E)

★ Fleur de Sel

Chef Cyril Renaud wanted his first restaurant to be a personal statement. So he hung his own watercolors, painted the menu covers, and named the place after the highly prized, hand-harvested sea salt that's native to Brittany, just like him. At lunch, the $20 tasting menu shows off his equally distinctive culinary style in the form of truffle-flecked parsnip soup with chestnut ravioli, and chicken breast with foie gras sauce. • 5 E. 20th St. (212-460-9100). (M–E)

Madison Bistro

What every neighborhood needs: a casual spot for French classics like escargots, steak-frites, and bouillabaisse. Open-faced sandwiches called tartines are available at the bar, as is a nice selection of rustic French wines. • 238 Madison Ave., nr. 37th St. (212-447-1919). (M)

Nong

Seemingly overnight, the Asian-influenced Aleutia morphed into the all-Asian (mostly Thai and Japanese) Nong, and a chef who used to work at Le Cirque came in to consult on the spicy new menu. Choose from wok plates (chicken fried rice), large plates (miso-glazed Chilean sea bass), and bento-box lunches full of rolls, dumplings, and stir-fries. • 220 Park Ave. So., at 18th St. (212-529-3111). (M)

Rodeo Bar & Grill

This place bills itself as "the longest-running honkytonk in New York," attracting bikers, families, and music-industry insiders. Urban cowboys can grab a drink at the horse trailer that's been converted into a bar, or tie on the feedbag with bison burgers, Santa Fe hand rolls, or the latest menu addition, Pearson's Texas barbecue, imported from Queens. • 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (212-683-6500). (I)

★ Union Pacific

A dramatic otherworldly rain-forest setting is a fitting stage for Rocco DiSpirito's wildly inventive, wonderfully weird cooking. Sweet, small scallops nuzzled in their shells by blobs of sea urchin with an essence of tomato, mustard oil, mirin, and black mustard. Halibut braised in goose fat with ginger jus and shallot cracklings. Mango and papaya carpaccio with pineapple sherbet and candied cilantro. In less capable hands, mad delusions; in DiSpirito's, pure genius. • 111 E. 22nd St. (212-995-8500). (E)

14th–42nd Streets, West Side

★ Above

Don't be discouraged by the proletarian to-'n'-fro of 42nd Street. A sophisticated and handsomely designed hideaway waits in the twenty-first-floor lobby of the Times Square Hilton, and so does Galveston lobster chili, a classic Caesar, and butter-poached Maine lobster. • 234 W. 42nd St. (212-642-2626). (E)

Arno

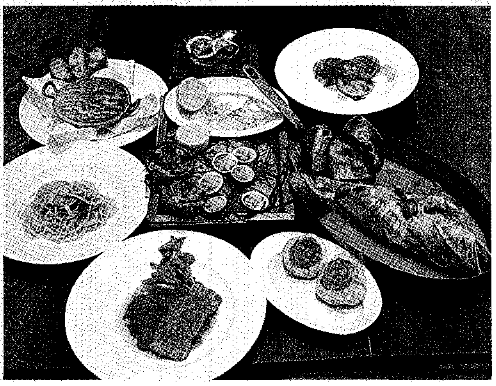
Garment District bigwigs and pre-Garden revelers flock to this lively, upscale northern Italian restaurant. Try reliable classics like veal scaloppine and red snapper sautéed with shrimp and clams, garlic, and white wine. • 141 W. 38th St. (212-944-7420). (M–E)

Data

Christmas Fish List

With the enduring popularity of Italian food, and the spate of trattorias and panini parlors opening on a weekly basis, it's no wonder that it's beginning to look a lot like an Italian Christmas. That means a Christmas Eve supper of seafood, alternately called *il cenone, la vigilia*, or **Feast of the Seven Fishes** (one for each of the holy sacraments). Never mind that the tradition has become more prevalent here than in the old country. Or that non-Italian kitchens, like Citarella and the Minnow, are getting in the *cenone* spirit with dishes like baccalà dumplings and marinated eel. There's a fishfest to suit every appetite. But act fast—Lupa and Babbo are already booked solid.

HOLY WATER: The Feast of the Seven Fishes at Esca.



Cucina 256 Fifth Avenue, Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0711)	New chef Mark Strausman squeezes seven fishes into three family-style courses, from baked clams and fritto misto to roasted striped bass alla Siciliana. Manhattanites will find the same $45 prix fixe at Campagna, Strausman's Flatiron fixture.
Esca 402 West 43rd Street (212-564-7272)	Chef David Pasternack plans to run his holiday menu for two weeks leading up to Christmas, offering ample opportunity to sample the crudo of the day, grilled octopus with blood oranges, baccalà, and fried local eel Neapolitan-style ($70; menu changes daily).
Felidia 243 East 58th Street (212-758-1479)	Why stop at seven when you can have thirteen courses, signifying Christ and his disciples? But no one's expected to consume two antipasti, three soups, three pastas, and five main courses, which is why it's all offered à la carte.
Five Points 31 Great Jones Street (212-253-5700)	For his second annual Italian Christmas Eve, chef Marc Meyer serves up a $50 three-course feast featuring selections like frittura of Florida shrimp, hand-cut fettuccine with bottarga di tonno, and whole grilled orata. Save room for the ricotta-fritter finale.
fresh 105 Reade Street (212-406-1900)	Chef Martin Burge's $75 Feast of the Seven Fishes is a loose interpretation of the old-world custom. We'd wager that warm oysters and caviar with leek fondue and grilled squid stuffed with braised short ribs never graced a Neapolitan holiday table.
San Domenico NY 240 Central Park South (212-265-5959)	Tony May keeps things relatively simple with a $70 five-course prix fixe, offered December 23 through 28 (except on Christmas). Chef Odette Fada's acclaimed way with risotto will be on display in a luxe version featuring oysters and Franciacorta spumante.

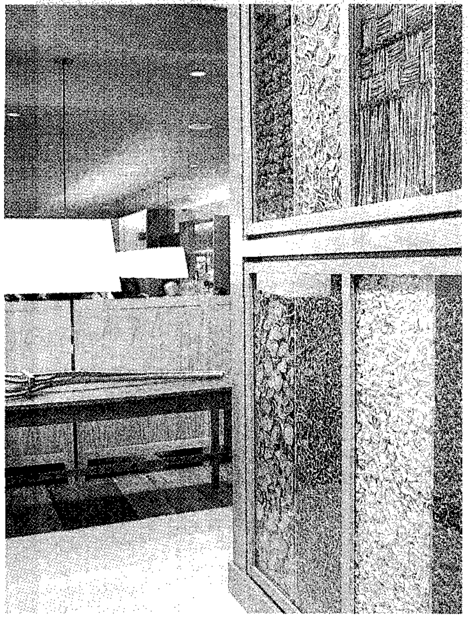
PHOTOGRAPHED BY KENNETH CHEN.

Opening

Never the Twain Shall Meat

When David Wu and his brother Darren were growing up, it was a given that they ate all their vegetables—their parents, after all, founded Zen Palate. Clearly, the organic apple doesn't fall far from the tree: After respective stints in the family business and at the New York Restaurant School, the brothers have opened Gobo (Japanese for "burdock root"), a vegetarian restaurant with an open kitchen, an organic juice bar, and—in a departure from their parents' alcohol-free policy—a beer-and-wine license. The meatless menu takes a global turn with tea-smoked tofu, flageolet-and-cremini casserole, tofu salmon with coconut-curry rice, and pappardelle with vegan Bolognese sauce. (401 Sixth Avenue; 212-255-3242.)

NUTS AND BERRIES: An organic milieu at Gobo.



Bryant Park Grill
This straightforward American restaurant boasts the city's prettiest pocket park as its backdrop. During the summer, the outdoor café is as mobbed as Times Square. Claim a table indoors at the calmer Grill and try the Caesar salad, dry-aged New York strip steak, or maple-glazed Atlantic salmon. • 40th St., between Fifth and Sixth Aves. (212-840-6500). (M–E)

★ City Bakery
Heavenly tarts, perfectly textured cookies and brownies, luscious lemonades, ultrathick and creamy hot chocolate—even homemade marshmallows—beckon irresistibly from the checkout counter. Pre-dessert, there are inspired sandwiches like roasted pear and ricotta salata, and the only salad bar we obsess over, plus a breakfast and lunch counter with its own menu, and a habit-forming weekend brunch. • 3 W. 18th St. (212-366-1414). (I–M)

elmo
Three years after their snazzy remake of Leshko's, its owners have exported their Knoll chairs and retro-mod tendencies to Chelsea, where chef Kevin Reilly cooks in a style he calls "ethnic New York." That means alphabet soup with dilled chicken dumplings and smoked paprika oil, and vegetable lo mein with roasted grapefruit and cashews. That painting above the bar happens to be Ross Bleckner's first commission in a decade. • 156 Seventh Ave., nr. 19th St. (212-337-8000). (M)

★ Ilo
Though its neutral, geometric décor may appear too understated to crest the torrential wave of hotel restaurants, Ilo makes the rest of them seem like washouts. Chef-owner Rick Laakkonen's charms and talents are many: a rich lemon-thyme-scented ragout of octopus and Manila clams; pan-roasted rabbit with olives and oregano; grilled quail devilishly grounded by white hominy; and a gloriously simple roasted duck that will make you consider taking up residence at the Bryant Park. • 40 W. 40th St. (212-642-2255). (E)

Le Madri
Pino Luongo's Chelsea mainstay has long enjoyed a reputation for rustic informality and flavorful Tuscan fare like sautéed chicken livers with pancetta and sage, buttermilk-and-Parmesan-marinated soft-shell crabs, and who can resist the wood-oven pizzas and fabulous focaccia robiola? The sidewalk café is a nice warm-weather spot for a light lunch of salad and pasta. • 168 W. 18th St. (212-727-8022). (M–E)

Man Ray
French record producer Thierry Klemeniuk recruited a team of noted lounge lizards for this assault on late-night, glamorama New York. He outfitted an old Chelsea firehouse with lots of retro-looking Pan-Asian knickknacks, and the food is better than it should be. Chef Benjamin De Forest's menu mixes unfussy French bistro standards like frisée aux lardons alongside some trendy dishes like seared fennel-pollen-crusted yellowfin tuna. • 147 W. 15th St. (212-929-5000). (M–E)

Nick & Stef's Steakhouse
Los Angeles chef Joachim Splichal opened the first branch of this steakhouse in his hometown, knowing it might play even better in red-meat-loving Manhattan. There's skillet cornbread, creamed spinach, and chocolate soufflé. And where's the beef? Front and center, hung out to dry in a steel-and-glass aging chamber. • 9 Penn Plaza (212-563-4444). (M–E)

Slate
Even if pool isn't your game, you might be willing to brave this hall's not exactly tony crowd, giant TVs, and techno throb—not to mention big guys wielding big sticks—for a crack at some delectable comfort food. The big cheese-and-mushroom-stuffed burger alone is worth crossing this cultural divide, and the chewy rare hanger steak is remarkable. • 54 W. 21st St. (212-989-0096). (M)

T.S. Ma
If you work at CNN, MSG, or the main post office branch, you've likely already eaten here. But if you're catching a train at Penn Station, or have tickets to the Garden, you should be aware that you're only minutes away from a plate of salt-and-pepper shrimp or General Tso's chicken. As has become increasingly prevalent in the Chinese-restaurant universe, there's also a sushi bar, plus a private dining area. • 360 W. 31st St. (212-971-0050). (M)

World Yacht Dining Cruises
Take an out-of-town visitor to see the sights—all of them—and sup on a selection from the "Best of New York" menu: featuring dishes based on recipes from the Sea Grill's Ed Brown, Olives's Todd English, and Park Avenue Cafe's David Burke, among others. Jacket required. • Pier 81, W. 41st St. at the Hudson River (212-630-8100). (E)

43rd–56th Streets, East Side

★ Avra
Just as they are uptown at sister restaurant Trata, Fulton Street-fresh whole fish are priced by the pound and described on the menu like wines. Bar-

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PHOTOGRAPHED BY CARINA SALVI.

bounia, for example, is a "Mediterranean delicacy that tends to be bony but flavorful." Elsewhere on the menu, spinach pie goes Gallic as spanakopita napoleon and grape leaves get an unexpected stuffing of raw salmon, tuna, and cucumber. • 141 E. 48th St. (212-759-8550). (M–E)

★ Brasserie
Nostalgists may have wished for a clone of the original Brasserie. But the redesign is stunning and the big-brother video screens make as much of your entrance as those bygone steps used to. The classic French food (onion soup, steak frites, mandatory beignets) is satisfying and served from breakfast through late night—a welcome anomaly in this early-to-bed precinct. • 100 E. 53rd St. (212-751-4840). (M–E)

Café Centro
A big, shiny brasserie-cum-café in the lobby of the MetLife Building; the joint is as fun and good as non-expensive midtown gets. In the loud little Beer Bar, get one of the best hamburgers in town. Closed Sunday. • 200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (212-818-1222). (M)

★ D'Artagnan, The Rotisserie
After years of selling foie gras and game to restaurants, D'Artagnan finally has its own: a high-ceilinged duplex countrified with tiled floors, rough ocher walls, and a cozy bar. Besides signature terrines and charcuterie, there's seriously rib-sticking Gascon fare like cassoulet, terrific spit-roasted chicken, lamb, and "la garbure et son chabrot," a duck-confit soup dense enough to be eaten with a fork. Finish your meal like a true Gascon with a shot of Armagnac blanc from a baseless glass. • 152 E. 46th St. (212-687-0300). (M–E)

Giambelli 50th Ristorante
Upscale Italian fare served in a warm and cozy atmosphere. The chef imports esoteric varieties of pasta from Italy to prepare his specialties; the fish and meat dishes are as careful. • 46 E. 50th St. (212-688-2760). (M)

Haru
Haru means "spring" in Japanese, and the design theme at this fourth and funkiest Manhattan branch of the Haru chainlet is man-made nature, from the digital-photomural-of-grass floor to the robotic fish in the aquariums over the bar. The menu features all the usual suspects, plus fusion fare like a strip steak with wasabi croquette, spicy shallots, and ginger sauce. • 280 Park Ave., nr. 48th St. (212-490-9680). (M)

★ Kuruma Zushi
Nobu and Bondst might draw celebrity sushi fans, but this is where you'll find the true fanatics, willing to squander their savings on superlatively fresh sushi and sashimi in nondescript surroundings one flight above a midtown side street. Cognoscenti put themselves and their taste buds in the nimble hands of the sushi chef, who amazes with imported treasures like Japanese aji, sea eel, and prawn-Kuruma ebi. • 7 E. 47th St. (212-317-2802). (E)

★ Maloney & Porcelli
Maloney & Porcelli claims it isn't a steakhouse, but the tide of pinstripe and hunks of food suggest otherwise. The best meat dish, though, isn't steak but a mammoth "crackling" pork shank—which arrives with a steak knife thrust deep into it—and the service couldn't be nicer. • 37 E. 50th St. (212-750-2233). (E)

Nino's Positano
Upscale Italian specializing in food from the south, Positano in particular. Pastas range from the simple (fusilli with tomato-basil sauce) to the more complex (Cognac-infused seafood risotto), and main courses traverse similar territory. • 890 Second Ave., nr. 47th St. (212-355-5540). (M)

Smith & Wollensky
Urban cowboys herd together over big steaks with knives to match at impresario Alan Stillman's signature chophouse. The place has that landmark-steakhouse look—bare oak floors, a raffish air, and bustling waiters wearing service stars. There's surf and turf aplenty, improvisations at lunch, and an enviable wine cellar. • 797 Third Ave., at 49th St. (212-753-1530). (M–E)

Tropica
Always packed at lunch, but squeeze in at the bar and order the conch chowder and a glass of tropical iced tea. The dining room serves some of the most imaginative Caribbean-inspired seafood in town, but be sure to go on a weekday—the restaurant, located in the lobby of the MetLife Building, is closed Saturday and Sunday. • 200 Park Ave., nr. 45th St. (212-867-6767). (M–E)

43rd–56th Streets, West Side

★ Beacon
The gimmick here is cooking over an open fire: wood-roasted trout, spit-roasted duck with grilled scallions, roast suckling pig with grilled apples and bitter chocolate rub, even oysters. The house-baked breads are exceptional. And in an age of designer martinis and so-so cosmos, the classic-cocktail list is precision science. • 25 W. 56th St. (212-332-0500). (E)

Bello
Locals flock here for generous portions of well-priced Northern Italian served in a casually elegant atmosphere. Free parking with dinner after 5 P.M. • 863 Ninth Ave., at 56th St. (212-246-6773). (M)

Ben Benson's Steak House
This rollicking steakhouse has long fed hordes of hungry, beef-eating businessmen and the people who love them. At a time when steakhouses were famous for rudeness and hauteur, Benson's made a point of homeyness. The festive air gets pretty thick by the bar, where cigars prevail, but there's a weatherproofed "front porch" and a dining room devoted entirely to the assiduous consumption of prime aged beef. • 123 W. 52nd St. (212-581-8888). (E)

Benihana
Long before *Iron Chef* taught us just how quick-handed knife-wielding Japanese cooks can be, there were the tableside cooking shows that are still the main draw at this teppanyaki steakhouse. Kids, of course, love it. • 47 W. 56th St. (212-581-0930). (E)

Cascina
The communal farmhouse tables and equally rustic house wines, imported from the owner's Northern Italian vineyard, conspire to make this trattoria feel more Tuscan countryside than Hell's Kitchen storefront. Beyond lasagne and minestrone, the menu surprises with dishes like rabbit casserole in a bread crust, barbecued veal ribs, and whole-wheat pizza with smoked salmon and cream cheese. • 647 Ninth Ave., nr. 45th St. (212-245-4422). (M)

Cité
Ambassador of beef Alan Stillman cops a French accent at this soaring midtown steakhouse known for its wine dinners. Meat is just the hard core of the menu, a document that also includes pan-seared crab cake and roasted salmon, and desserts big enough for two or more to share. For more casual dining, try the Cité Grill next door. • 120 W. 51st St. (212-956-7100). (M–E)

Coco Pazzo Teatro
Tucked away inside the Time Hotel, this popular theater-district hangout is equally suited for a drink before the curtain or a leisurely meal after the show. The casually elegant dining room is a comfortable, informal spot for hearty dishes like mussels steamed with tomato, basil, and white wine; and grilled ribeye smothered with onions, peppers, and mushrooms. • 224 W. 49th St. (212-320-2929). (M–E)

Da Rosina
Those with curtains to make and bellies to fill find just what they're looking for in this Restaurant Row standby, a reliable source for homemade pasta, chicken and veal cutlets every which way, and Italian classics from fried clams to tirami su. A $22 prix fixe dinner and $13.95 lunch make it easy to splurge on affordable indulgences like spicy lobster frutti di mare and broiled sirloin steak. • 342 W. 46th St. (212-977-7373). (M)

★ DB Bistro Moderne
Daniel Boulud's latest venture is supposed to be an homage to the simple bistro foods of his youth, but the great chef can't help making things fancy. Take boeuf en gelee, which Chef Boulud coats with sweet horseradish cream and serves in a dainty parfait glass. Or the $29 "DB Burger," leavened with foie gras and short ribs and a silver cup of pommes soufflés on the side. The space can feel a little hectic around theater time, but elbow your way in if you can. • 55 W. 44th St. (212-391-2400). (E)

★ Del Frisco's
Want to see what mahogany fashioned by testosterone looks like? This is without question the most urbane steakhouse you will ever see, its meat locker filled with terrific beef. From the usually overrated filet mignon, whose buttery blandness gets surmounted by a brash pepper-splattered crust, to the superb 26-ounce "double eagle" strip, Del Frisco's is a silverware-clanking crowd pleaser. • 1221 Sixth Ave., at 49th St. (212-575-5129). (E)

Haru
This branch of the stylish, popular Japanese mini-chain, like the others, specializes in fresh, oversize sushi, fifteen house sauces, plus fusion fare like a strip steak with wasabi croquette, spicy shallots, and ginger sauce. Natural wood tones and a wall of tree branches separating the dining room from the sushi bar brings a little serenity to Times Square. • 205 W. 43rd St. (212-398-9810). (M)

Johnnie's Italian
This old-world Italian restaurant has been a midtown fixture for over four decades. The menu runs the gamut from basic pastas to chicken, veal, and seafood dishes; the $14.95 dinner special is a particularly good deal. • 135 W. 45th St. (212-869-5565). (I–M)

★ Noche
This Latin-themed nightclub and restaurant was inspired by a popular weekly dance party at the late, lamented Windows on the World, and its design evokes a pre-Castro club with acres of mosaic tile, stained-glass panels, a domed ceiling that changes color, and roving mojito carts. Chef Ramiro Jimenez, late of Chicama, provides a Pan-Latino panoply of tamales, enchiladas, seviches, and platters of roast suckling pig and Brazilian barbecued chicken. • 1604 Broadway, at 49th St. (212-541-7070). (M)

Rock Center Café
Daily specials keep this contemporary rinkside dining room's American menu interesting, as does the strong Italian accent. Seafood risotto, fried calamari, and a burger with taleggio cheese keep diners focused on their plates rather than on the interpretive freestyle routines being perfomed on the ice. • 20 W. 50th St. (212-332-7620). (M)

★ The Sea Grill
Chef Ed Brown cooks fish so fresh at this Rockefeller Center seafood shrine that the menu notes the name of the boat that caught them; "à la plancha" means they're seared on a special grill that is supposed to excel at retaining moisture and flavor. Kitchen equipment aside, the results are indisputably delectable, as are appetizers like mussels in a Thai red-curry broth. • 19 W. 49th St. (212-332-7610). (E)

Seppi's
Like Raoul's, its atmospheric downtown progenitor, Seppi's has a tin ceiling, a roving fortune-teller, and an unusual-for-midtown closing time of 2 A.M. The bistro menu—a winning composite of French and Italian—lists tuna niçoise and tartes flambées alongside prawn risotto. • 123 W. 56th St. (212-708-7444). (M–E)

St. Andrews
In what might be New York's only full-fledged Scottish restaurant, the bartenders wear kilts, the scotch is single-malt, and the décor revolves around pictures of famous golf courses. The hearty steak-and-seafood menu features rack of lamb and brook trout stuffed with crabmeat and Irish oatmeal in a scotch-whiskey sauce. • 120 W. 44th St. (212-840-8413). (I–M)

★ Town
A delightful sensation takes over the moment you descend into Town—that all too infrequent feeling when you know you're going to be glad you came. From a front desk actually focused on you to a room aglow in plush, sleek romanticism, Town revels in being all grown up. But the real forte is chef-owner Geoffrey Zakarian, who prepares subtle, sophisticated dishes like tuna in ramp-and-sea-urchin sauce, and duck steak with buckwheat pilaf. • 15 W. 56th St. (212-582-4445). (M–E)

Trattoria Dopo Teatro
Famous for its signature open ravioli of lobster and lamb, the menu also offers an across-the-board selection of regional Italian specialties. The dining room is decorated with Italian cinema stills and single-minded connoisseurs, and private parties can pursue their passions in the wine room, the grappa room, or the cigar lounge. • 125 W. 44th St. (212-869-2849). (M)

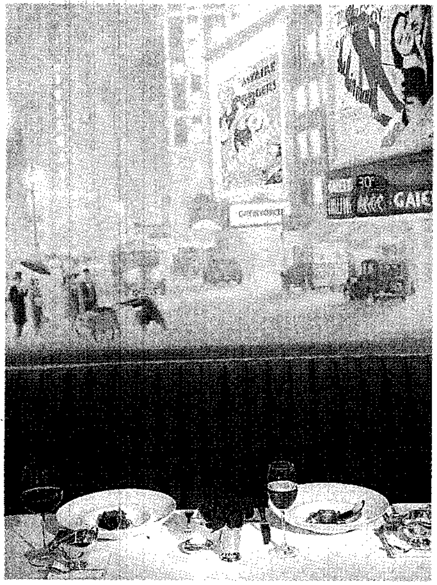
Tuscan Square
Pino Luongo's most ambitious project yet, this Rockefeller Center paean to all things Tuscan combines a rustic dining room with a downstairs marketplace

Ask Gael

Find me a restaurant with zero decibels.

The new **Upstairs at '21'** with its "let 'em eat foie gras" $85 prix fixe is just the twilight zone you seek. It feels like I've blundered into a private dinner party, just nine tables, so quiet, rather like a Victorian-hotel hideaway. None of tonight's seemingly wowed tourists—I bet the concierge sent them—would have gotten by the doorman at the long-gone, mythically snooty '21,' me included. Now that the snoot's softened, I found a corner table in the toy-bedecked saloon unfailingly sexy, through ownership upheavals and never mind who's cooking. After six years bound by tradition in the downstairs kitchen, chef Erik Blauberg is flying. Alas, most everything we ate was muddled and overdressed, even my favorite, the cinnamon-lavender duck braised in organic honey. Still, the passion-fruit dessert and a celebration of chocolate are pretty good. And the service is like being rich. An obliging captain finds us a $45 wine we love from the house's high-priced treasury. "Forget the food," my date whispers into my ear. "This place is a miracle. It's so quiet and romantic." I spare him a glance at our $278 check. (21 West 52nd Street; 212-265-1900.)

ABOVE IT ALL: Upstairs at '21,' it's all peace and quiet.



complex of salad, sandwich, and pasta stations, plus a bakery and espresso bar. Chef Steven Petrecca's Tuscan menu offers such enticing entrées as fettuccine with veal-and-sage ragu and a ribeye steak with sautéed broccoli rabe. • 16 W. 51st St. (212-977-7777). (M-E)

Utsav Festive India
The $13.95 all-you-can-eat lunch buffet may be pricier than some, but the setting—an elevated bridge between two midtown office buildings—is posher, with tablecloths and flowers and gracious waiters wearing chili-pepper-patterned neckties. Every day brings a selection of four vegetable and three meat dishes, plus salads, chutneys and pickles, nan, superb saffron-speckled rice, and silky-sweet Indian puddings for dessert. • 1185 Sixth Ave., nr. 46th St. (212-575-2525). (M)

Vago
This Northern Italian midtowner makes its own pasta and breads along with house specialties like warm sea-bass carpaccio and venison medallions sautéed with Barolo and chestnuts. The wine list is extensive, and the dining room is adorned with frescoes, alabaster sconces, and cherrywood trim. • 29 W. 56th St. (212-765-5155). (M-E)

57th–60th Streets

★ Atelier
An intriguing diver-scallop-and-bluefin tartare and sensational roasted lobster with artichoke and rhubarb (on the sane $68 prix fixe) show that Gabriel Kreuther (Jean Georges's former chef de cuisine) aspires to the elite of our town's season-driven chefs. His morel soup with favas, peas, and mint oil is spring in a bowl. And tapioca balls in pineapple cream—the daring dessert-before-dessert—almost upstage the grapefruit tart and the rhubarb-strawberry soup with goat-milk sorbet that follow. • 50 Central Park So. (212-521-6125). (E)

★ Brasserie 8 1/2
At this souped-up designer bookend to the newly modish Brasserie, you get big brasserie dishes plus a pumpkin-carpeted-diva staircase entrance, and two subterranean, airport-lounge-style bars. The simpler menu choices tend to be better, like the frisée salad, the burger, and the cornflake-crusted crab cakes. • 9 W. 57th St. (212-829-0812). (M-E)

The Manhattan Ocean Club
Savor your seafood in an elegant dining room decorated with Picasso ceramics. A pictorial menu features a dozen or so smiley-faced fish. Preparations range from classic (Dover sole meunière) to creative (grouper with roasted pineapple and black peppercorns). Or have the chef prepare your fish any way you like. • 57 W. 58th St. (212-371-7777). (E)

★ Norma's
Anyone who equates French toast or biscuits with Mom and unconditional love might agree that the Parker Meridien's spiffy Norma's, with its exuberant all-day breakfast, is worthy of an award. Pancakes by a mom on Prozac. Complimentary fruit-smoothie shots and a duo of croissants oozing smoked-salmon-flecked scrambled eggs. If there really can be too much of a good thing, then breakfast here ought to be against the law. • 118 W. 57th St. (212-708-7460). (M)

ONEc.p.s.
Alan Stillman, along with executive chef David Burke and designer Adam Tihany, has rewired the Plaza's Edwardian Room. Tihany has colored the oaken walls caramel and put huge scarlet lampshades on the chandeliers, and the irrepressible Burke has concocted a whimsical menu that includes a foie gras–spiked burger and a rack of lamb accompanied by shepherd's pie. The mosaic floors and ceiling remain untouched, and the view of Central Park is as grand as ever. • 1 Central Pk. So. (212-583-1111). (E)

★ San Domenico
You won't find a more elegant big-deal Italian restaurant in New York. We treasure it for the luxurious space at and between tables, the cool coach-leather chairs, the clockwork service, and the refinement of the risottos, pastas, fish, and game. Owner Tony May has an uncompromising passion for the highest quality Italian ingredients and devotedness to classical technique that rivals any Michelin-starred chef, and it shows. • 240 Central Park So. (212-265-5959). (E)

★ Shelly's New York
The latest Shelly Fireman production inhabits an old Automat space, ergo the "Horn & Hardart" creamed

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spinach and macaroni and cheese. Only the assimilative Fireman (of Brooklyn Diner fame) would offer towering shellfish platters and stone crabs flown in daily from Joe's in Miami Beach alongside miso-glazed halibut, chicken schnitzel, and a 50-ounce porterhouse steak cooked "Brooklyn style" and make it all work. • 104 W. 57th St. (212-245-2422). (M-E)

Above 60th Street, East Side

★ The Bar @ Etats-Unis
This might be the Upper East Side's best gourmet bargain. And considering it's only got 24 seats—seven of them bar stools—the joint's low profile is a blessing. The bar shares an impressive cellar with Etats-Unis, its sister restaurant across the street, whence comes some of the hearty fare like a seriously satisfying beef stew. For a lighter bite, you can't go wrong with farmhouse cheeses and charcuterie paired with one of the terrific by-the-glass selections. • 247 E. 81st St. (212-396-9928). (M)

The Boathouse in Central Park
Claim a table by a flowery umbrella on the pondside deck and give thanks to Frederick Olmsted and generations of park champions for preserving this precious greenery. The American menu leans toward fresh seafood like pan-roasted monkfish with spring onions and garlic confit, and seared wild striped bass. • E. 72nd St. and Park Dr. N. (212-517-2233). (M-E)

★ Café Sabarsky
Museum Mile is full of museum cafés, but none quite like this elegant evocation of a Viennese-style kaffeehaus at Ronald Lauder's Neue Galerie New York. The artistic sensibility permeates the café, with its reproductions of Josef Hoffmann sconces, Adolf Loos bentwood chairs, and Otto Wagner fabrics. And the theme continues with tortes (Sacher and Linzer), Bavarian ham for breakfast, cod strudel for lunch—and Friday nights only, dinner service until 9 P.M. • 1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-288-0665). (M)

★ Centolire
The theme of Pino Luongo's latest is Italian-American/Tuscan. Everything on the menu is labeled either Old World (like timpano, à la *Big Night*) or New World (spaghetti with spicy lobster and oven-dried cherry tomatoes, a dazzlingly good dry-aged ribeye steak). And anything with a little pot-shaped symbol next to it is slowly baked in terra-cotta, a technique that bridges both chronological and continental divides. • 1167 Madison Ave., near 86th St. (212-734-7711). (M-E)

Coco Pazzo
Pino Luongo's Upper East Side temple of Tuscan is a neighborhood spot for a particularly demanding neighborhood. For everyone else, dishes like rigatoni with sweet and spicy sausage and peas in a tomato-cream sauce, and bistecca alla Fiorentina—not to mention an award-winning wine list—definitely merit a special trip. • 23 E. 74th St. (212-794-0205). (E)

★ Daniel
Daniel Boulud is blessed with the gift of being able to add familiar flavors into the most stunning of summations, like walnuts and foie gras that intensify the lush gaminess of quail. He routinely triumphs in why-didn't-anyone-else-think-of-it feats like sweetbreads without that heady aftertaste—suspending them between a rhubarb glaze and spinach purée. His chocolate bombe soars like no other. • 60 E. 65th St. (212-288-0033). (E)

Haru Sake Bar
Very fresh sushi, sashimi, tempura, plus Japanese fusion fare, and an expanded selection of sake and sake cocktails are the draw at this popular uptown branch of the Japanese mini-chain. Take-out service too. • 1327 Third Ave., at 76th St. (212-452-1028). (M)

Maine Lobster Seafood Restaurant
For a chunk of land surrounded by water, Manhattan surprisingly isn't known for its casual American seafood, the type of salt-water-scented fare that defines New England dining. Maine Lobster hopes to change all that with its across-the-board seafood menu of stone crabs, "very crabby" crab cakes, lobster rolls, pan-seared scallops, and steamed lobster. • 1631 Second Ave., nr. 85th St. (212-327-4800). (M)

Shopping

Let Them Eat Christmas Cake

That fabled single fruitcake, perpetually pawned off from one person to the next, wound up at our office last week, and rather than send it on its way as tradition dictates, we decided to eat it. It came wrapped in an attractive hand-watercolored paper from **June Taylor Company**, Oakland's font of exotic jams and marmalades, and was loaded with mostly organic, intensely flavorful prunes, raisins, peaches, apricots, dried cherries, candied peel, currants, and almonds throughout brandy-perfumed sweet-and-spicy cake ($25). Sliced thin and served with a glass of port or sherry, it's capable of dispelling the nasty-fruitcake myth in a single bite and turning thoughts of tactless regifting into ones of shameless hoarding. But not to worry: Taylor makes them year-round. For unrepentant citron-phobes, we suggest the offella d'oro, a fruit-free cousin of the panettone artisanally made in Verona and imported by Chelsea Market's **BuonItalia** ($27.50). It's tall and puffy and redolent of sweet butter and almonds, superb as is or toasted with a cup of tea or coffee. (June Taylor Company; 510-923-1522, or www.junetaylorjams.com. BuonItalia, 95 Ninth Avenue, near 15th Street; 212-633-9090.)

PANDORO'S BOX: Christmas cake worth the splurge.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TINA RUPP.

Mark's
Decked out like a private London club, with plump, tasseled pillows. Fine French-American cooking (roasted beet salad with goat cheese, thyme-crusted tuna with tomato and black-olive vinaigrette), award-winning wine list, and a Willy Wonka–worthy chocolate tea. • 25 E. 77th St., in the Mark Hotel (212-879-1864). (E)

Mo's Caribbean Bar and Mexican Grill
Pack your bags, sweetie; we're going to the islands. Close enough. This spot with an MTV-beach-party vibe serves Caribbean and Mexican-American fare like jerk chicken burritos, enchiladas, and fajitas—all in a dining room with real palm trees. Reserve for Monday's Lobster Madness night. Leave with a suntan. • 1454 Second Ave., at 76th St. (212-650-0561). (M)

Nino's
Elegant Italian with a romantic mural garden and nightly live entertainment. Try the grilled dishes—tuna on a bed of balsamic onions, double-cut veal chop—or the lobster fra diavolo. • 1354 First Ave., nr. 72nd St. (212-988-0002). (E)

☆ Park Avenue Cafe
A polished, countrified American café for business lunches and get-to-know-yous in the evening. Chef David Burke makes the tired catchall "American fare" sing, and keeps the neighbors rapt with signature dishes like salmon pastrami with crushed pepper. • 100 E. 63rd St. (212-644-1900). (E)

☆ The Post House
How grand can a steakhouse get? If you took a meat-and-potatoes guy who liked to hang out at the Art Student's League, gave him a few years at Princeton, and financed his *Wanderjahr* abroad, he might come home and open the Post House. It's clubby but not snooty, with a Christo here and a Twombly there, and a well-traveled menu that includes everything from a Cajun rib steak to venison osso buco. • 28 E. 63rd St., in the Lowell Hotel (212-935-2888). (E)

Sel & Poivre
Stanching the flow downtown for bistro fare. Regulars find what they are looking for in this quaint, countrified space. The country-French cuisine includes steak au poivre, bouillabaisse, and roasted chicken, and the prix fixe menus are a bargain. • 853 Lexington Ave., nr. 64th St. (212-517-5780). (M)

Toraya
A Japanese tea room in an elegant townhouse offering an enticing assortment of confections, green teas, and desserts. • 17 E. 71st St. (212-861-1700). (I)

Above 60th Street, West Side

☆ Calle Ocho
Who'd a thunk it? That the West Side could ever boast a restaurant as uncalculatingly sexy as Calle Ocho, with its far wall's spectacular Caribbean sunset of glazed terracotta and its jewel-toned banquettes curving through the space like waves along the gulf? Let a staff so winning you at first suspect they're a few mojitos ahead of you steer you towards tangy lobster seviche, seafood paella, and terrific yuca fries. • 446 Columbus Ave., near 81st St. (212-873-5025). (M–E)

☆ Compass
It didn't work as Marika, not even when talented Neil Annis took over. With a shift of partners, the newly dubbed Compass has finally found a winning West Side mojo. This time around Annis's tweaked menu (a clever chopped salad, luscious vichyssoise, shimmering halibut, a first-rate veal chop, short ribs on fingerling purée) should garner as much attention as the design. • 208 W. 70th St. (212-875-8600). (E)

☆ Jean Georges
Are you ready for an amazing evening that is not about you? Nothing and no one at Jean Georges steals center stage from the wondrous creations of Jean-Georges Vongerichten. If you're okay with such divine supplication, prepare to be open-mouthed whenever you're not chewing. Nothing you encounter will fail to dazzle, from the simplest dish of asparagus and morels au jus to the unexpected combo of sweetbreads en cocotte with ginger and licorice. • 1 Central Park West (212-299-3900). (E)

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★ Max SoHa
This charming offshoot of Max, the perennially cramped East Village trattoria, has settled in a previously broccoli-rabe-bereft Morningside Heights neighborhood. The cooking—hearty rigatoni with meatballs and Italian sausage, toasted garlic bread with anchovies, osso buco—is as good as it is at Max downtown, so, at least until the competition arrives, you can take your waiter's word for it when he announces that this is the best tirami su around. • 1274 Amsterdam Ave., at 123rd St. (212-531-2221). (I-M) ($)

★ Ouest
After cultivating a coterie of foodie followers at places like Alison on Dominick and Cascabel, Tom Valenti brings his distinctive style of boldly layered flavors—and those lamb shanks—to a neighborhood legendarily short on sophisticated grub. Clearly, he's doing his darnedest to turn the tide with reprises of old favorites like potato, goat cheese, and truffle terrine with transcendent beets; and lusty short rib on an ooze of polenta perfumed with smoked onions. • 2315 Broadway, near 84th St. (212-580-8700). (M-E)

Rain
Slightly tamed for American consumption, the spices at this Upper West Side Thai restaurant are fragrant rather than fiery, but that doesn't detract from the appeal of dishes like Thai chicken-and-coconut soup, pad Thai, and curried beef. • 100 W. 82nd St. (212-501-0776). (M)

Restaurant 222
Still as cozy and romantic as ever, Restaurant 222 has changed direction: Owner Frank Valenza now calls it an "American-Italian" steakhouse. That means surprisingly flavorful fillet steaks accompanied by sauces like pizzaiola and nutted garlic and irresistible whipped potatoes. The prix fixe menus ($20 at lunch, $29.95 at dinner) are particularly good deals, especially compared with the pricy à la carte offerings. • 222 W. 79th St. (212-799-0400). (E) ($)

Sapphire Indian Cuisine
A couple of partners from TriBeCa's Salaam Bombay have brought regional Indian cuisine to Columbus Circle. The prix fixe lunch buffet is a bargain, and all the trendy territories (Goa, Gujarat) are well-represented. • 1845 Broadway, nr. 61st St. (212-245-4444). (M)

Scaletta
A dining room decorated in muted blues and pinks is the tranquil setting for refined Northern Italian fare, from smoked salmon and beef carpaccio to a selection of risotto and veal dishes. Conveniently located across the street from those famous dinosaurs at the Museum of Natural History. • 50 W. 77th St. (212-769-9191). (M)

Brooklyn

★ Cucina
Mark Strausman, the guiding culinary force behind Campagna and Fred's at Barneys, has unexpectedly taken the wheel at this pioneering Park Slope kitchen, where he's serving his distinctive brand of Italian-American comfort food: nutty grilled hen-of-the-woods mushrooms; tangy eggplant Parmesan; and signature pastas (toothsome penne in a creamy spinach sauce, the famous Campagna lasagna) all available by the half-order. You'll want to pace yourself for diet-be-damned entrées like veal Parmesan and peppery "Cucina steak." • 256 Fifth Ave., nr. Carroll St., Park Slope (718-230-0711). (M)

Queens

★ Spicy & Tasty
The name says it all at this spartan but clean, bright, and accommodating Sichuan restaurant a few blocks removed from Flushing's Main Street fray. There are no better adjectives to describe the red chili oil that characterizes this cuisine and ignites springy ma-la noodles, pork wontons, and dumplings. Standards like twice-sautéed pork and tea-smoked duck are salty, succulent, and flavorful. Try the flaky red-bean pastries for dessert while an intense card game rages in the back room. • 133-43 Roosevelt Ave. (718-939-7788). (I)

Classical & Dance

Edited by Alicia Zuckerman

Classical Music

"A Joyous Christmas Concert"
Soprano Sylvia McNair, the St. Bartholomew's Choir, and 50 children sing a holiday program to benefit Citymeals-on-Wheels. 12/18 at 7:30. • St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 51st St. (212-378-0248); $50–$150.

★ Jaime Laredo and Pinchas Zukerman
Two of chamber music's best perform works by Boccherini, Arensky, and Tchaikovsky. 12/17 and 12/18 at 8. • 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $35.

Metropolitan Museum of Art Concerts
The American Boychoir sings Renaissance carols and traditional holiday music from around the world, 12/18; Concertante Chamber Players perform Purcell, Boccherini, Bach, and Mozart, 12/19; the Abyssinian Baptist Church Sanctuary Choir sings spirituals and other sacred music, 12/22. Concerts at 6:30 and 8:30. • Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-570-3949); $55.

Music Sacra
Richard Westenburg conducts Handel's *Messiah*. 12/18 at 8. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $15–$100.

★ National Chorale
The audience sings along in the thirty-fifth annual sing-in of Handel's *Messiah*. 12/18 at 8. • Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $35–$82.

★ New York Philharmonic
Performs Handel's *Messiah* for the first time in two decades, with the Westminster Symphonic Choir and soloists, including much-acclaimed countertenor David Daniels. Sir Neville Marriner conducts. 12/18 and 12/19 at 7:30; 12/20 and 12/21 at 8, at Riverside Church. Also, the New York Choral Artists and soloists join the Phil for the world premiere of Rodion Shchedrin's opera-in-concert, *The Enchanted Wanderer*, based on the 1873 Russian novella by Nikolai Leskov, led by Lorin Maazel. 12/19 at 7:30; 12/20 and 12/21 at 8. The German Brass joins the orchestra's Principal Brass Quintet for a holiday concert, 12/22 at 3. And Maazel conducts all-Gershwin on New Year's Eve: *Cuban Overture, An American in Paris*, and selections from *Porgy and Bess*, broadcast live on channel 13. 12/31 at 8. • *Messiah* only: Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. (212-721-6500); $25–$59. Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $25–$88 (12/31: $55–$220).

★ St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble
Presents a holiday program of Baroque music by Handel, Telemann, Corelli, Pachelbel, and Bach. 12/18 at 8. • Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $30.

"Paul Winter's Winter Solstice Celebration"
African music and dance reign at Winter's twenty-third annual event, known to draw an audience of 10,000. Performers include acclaimed Zimbabwe singer Lucky Moyo, African gospel singer Theresa Thomason, and members of the Forces of Nature Dance Theater Ensemble. 12/19–12/21 at 7:30; 12/21 at 2. • Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (212-662-2133); $29–$65.

Stefan Wolpe Society
Unsung, avant-garde composer's centennial celebration continues with a program of music by the composer and those he influenced. 12/19 at 7:30. • Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-9400); $15.

New York Pops
Annual holiday concert features Randall Thompson's rarely performed *The Testament of Freedom*, written in 1943 in honor of Thomas Jefferson, to Jefferson's text. Legendary singer-pianist Bobby Short is a guest artist in other works. 12/20 and 12/21 at 8. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $24–$79.

★ Polygraph Lounge
Wacky and talented duo hell-bent on smart satire offers a review of BAM's Next Wave Festival. 12/20 and 12/21 at 9:30. • Brooklyn Academy of Music, BAMcafé, 30 Lafayette St. (718-636-4139); free with $10 food-and-drink minimum.

Western Wind Vocal Ensemble
Performs medieval carols, Renaissance polyphony, Latin American villancicos, and other music. Holiday reception follows. 12/20 at 8. • Grace Church, Broadway at 10th St. (212-873-2848); $20.

Orchestra of St. Luke's
With the New York Baroque Soloists, perform Bach's cantatas for the fourth Sunday in Advent. 12/22 at 3. • Church of the Blessed Sacrament, 152 W. 72nd St. (212-579-2332); $25.

Pomerium
Grammy-nominated early-music a cappella ensemble performs Gregorian chant, devotional songs, and other sacred music for the season. 12/22 at 1 and 3. • The Cloisters Museum, Fort Tryon Park (212-650-2290); $35.

★ New York String Orchestra
Violinist Jaime Laredo celebrates ten years as orchestra conductor with Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1, featuring Lang Lang, Schubert's Symphony No. 8, and Grieg's *From Holberg's Time*. 12/24 at 7. He's joined by violinist Leila Josefowicz and the Young People's Chorus of New York City, in an all-Mendelssohn concert narrated by Claire Bloom. 12/28 at 8. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $17–$47.

Zamir Open Sing
Singers and listeners are invited to join the Zamir Choral Foundation for an afternoon of Jewish music on Christmas. 12/25 at 1. • Jewish Community Center, Amsterdam Ave. at 76th St. (212-362-3335); $15: singers, $5: listeners.

★ Peter Schickele
Presents "Oops, I Did It Again: Yet Another P.D.Q. Bach Concert" with a work for Japanese koto, Renaissance krummhorn, and musical saw; Concerto for Bassoon Versus Orchestra; and others from the signature Schickele *oeuvre*. 12/27 at 8 and 12/29 at 3. • Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $38–$68.

Performance

Avant Cards

WILD AND CRAZY GUYS: Mark Stewart and Rob Schwimmer are Polygraph Lounge.

If you pine for just one more Spike Jones, Firesign Theatre, or Tom Lehrer show, get yourself to the BAMcafé this weekend. The zany, musically tight, and lyrically brilliant duo **Polygraph Lounge** has been enlisted as comic relief, celebrating twenty years of BAM's Next Wave Festival. It's billed as a celebrity roast—except, says Polygraph's Mark Stewart, "you roast Dean Martin, you roast Don Rickles. You don't roast Laurie Anderson." "It's a basting," offers Rob Schwimmer, talking over his partner. Highlights are likely to be the story of the Kronos Quartet told variously through a David Bowie song, the theme from *Green Acres*, "Purple Haze," and Stravinsky's *Petroushka*; a nose-flute rendition of Terry Riley's much-acclaimed *In C*, with audience participation; and a nod to minimalist pioneers Steve Reich, Philip Glass, et al., to the tune of "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious." Successful professional musicians in their other lives, Stewart and Schwimmer met five years ago in an East Village bar and spent the next year and a half making each other laugh over drinks before a friend asked them to perform at a CD-release party. That led to gigs at CB's 313 Gallery and Joe's Pub. "Every time we did a run, by the time the last show was on, we'd be breaking fire codes," recalls Schwimmer, and—amazingly, on cue—the fire alarm in his hotel room goes off. Stewart responds without missing a beat: "We've always relied on the kindness of accidental noises." (See "Classical Music.") A.Z.

Opera

Amato Opera
Rossini's *Barber of Seville* runs weekends through 1/5.

Ground Rules This section emphasizes classical concerts, recitals, and outdoor performances (but only the premeditated ones), and includes the occasional jazz concert if it is held, say, in a public space. Stars (★) indicate our editors' recommendations. For rock concerts and club information, see "Nightlife."

PHOTOGRAPH BY JULIE MARDIN.

Call for details. • Amato Opera, 319 Bowery (212-228-8200); $28 (12/31 gala: $110).

★ "La Bohème"
Baz Luhrmann's mammoth, fabulous production of the Puccini classic runs on Broadway. See "Theater" for details. • Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. (212-239-6200); $20–$95.

★ Metropolitan Opera
J. Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, with Jennifer Larmore, opens 12/19 and plays New Year's Eve. R. Strauss's *Elektra* closes 12/21. Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, starring Dmitri Hvorostovsky, opens 12/27. Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* and William Bolcom's *A View From the Bridge* are also onstage. Call, or visit metopera.org. • Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center (212-362-6000); $25–$280 (12/31 gala: $50–$850).

Dance

★ Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
Premieres Lynne Taylor-Corbett's *Prayers From the Edge*, based on sixties-era images from Africa and the Middle East, set to Peter Gabriel's *Passion*; also a transformed version of *Black Milk*, originally choreographed for the women of the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, and *Apex*, a take on freedom set to techno and jazz. Through 1/5. Call for details. • City Center, W. 55th St. nr. Sixth Ave. (212-581-1212); $25–$90.

★ Big Dance Theater
Director Paul Lazar, choreographer Annie-B Parson, and playwright Mac Wellman join forces for this modern take on *Antigone*. Through 12/22. Call for details. • Dance Theater Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. (212-924-0077); $32.

★ New York City Ballet
George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker* runs through 1/5. Call for details or visit nycballet.com. • New York State Theater, Lincoln Center (212-870-5570); $18–$90.

New York Theatre Ballet
Presents its annual one-hour *Nutcracker*, perfect for little kids with short attention spans. Through 12/22. Call for details. • Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160); $25 (kids: $20).

★ Doug Varone and Dancers
The Bottomland, a multimedia full-evening work about the lives of people in backwoods Kentucky, has its world premiere. Through 12/22. Call for details. • Ohio Theater, 66 Wooster St. (212-279-4200); $25–$32 (12/10: $150–$250).

★ Ballet Tech
Presents its annual "NoTCRACKER" season, full of lively, colorful works: *Papillon* and *Simon Sez*, featuring kids from the Ballet Tech school, and *Straw Hearts*, *Aurora I*, and *Pacific Dances*. 12/17–12/29. Call for details. • Joyce Theater, Eighth Ave. at 19th St. (212-242-0800); $40.

★ Mark Morris Dance Group
The Nutcracker gets the Morris treatment in his hip version of the holiday classic, *The Hard Nut*. 12/17–12/22. Call for details. • Brooklyn Academy of Music, Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette St. (718-636-4100); $25–$60. (12/17 gala: $150–$2,500).

★ Merce Cunningham Dance Company
Teams up with fourth graders from P.S. 234 to perform at the site of Annie Leibovitz's portrait photography exhibition, *Rewarding Lives* (Merce's photo is there). 12/18–12/20 at 7. • American Express Headquarters, 3 World Financial Center (212-255-8240, ext. 24); $15 (suggested).

Daniel Gwirtzman Dance Company
Company led by former Garth Fagan and Mark Morris dancer presents "New Territory," an evening of new dance set to original music by Jeff Story. 12/19–12/22 at 8. • Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. (212-334-7479); $15 (12/21 benefit: $35).

Moscow Ballet
Presents *The Great Russian Nutcracker*, combining the classic story with a prayer for peace. 12/22 at 2. • Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College (718-951-4500); $35.

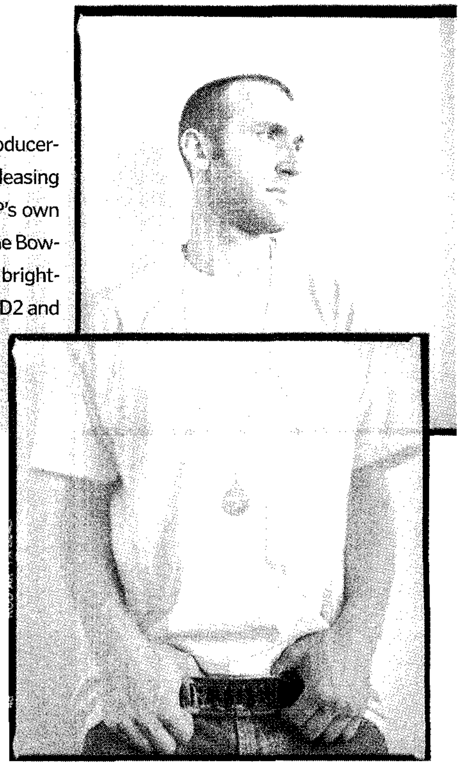
cue Nightlife

Edited by Ethan Brown

Nightlife

Def's Jam

Def Jux, the hip-hop record label run by rapper-producer-entrepreneur **El-P**, had an extraordinary year, releasing several of the genre's best records, including El-P's own anarchic *Fantastic Damage*. On December 27 at the Bowery Ballroom, El-P heads up a night of the label's brightest stars, including cut-and-paste maestro D.J. RJD2 and Aesop Rock, whose album *Labor Days* reconnects hip-hop to the blues. (See "Small Stages.")



JUX, THE POSE: RJD2 and labelmates play Bowery Ballroom.

Concerts

Phish
12/31 at 8. (See box.) • Madison Square Garden, Seventh Ave. and 34th St. (212-307-7171). $45.

★ Trans-Siberian Orchestra
12/21–12/23 at 8. Trans-Siberian Orchestra makes holiday music, but weirdly big and prog-rock-y. And led by a former metal head, no less. • Beacon Theater, Broadway and 74th St. (212-307-7171). $37–$60.

Small Stages

★ B.B. King Blues Club & Grill
12/21: Ronnie Spector's X-Mas Party Vol. 9. 12/26–12/27: The Machine. 12/30–12/31: Karl Denson's Tiny Universe (see box). • 243 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144).

Bottom Line
12/18: "The Music of Frank Zappa" with Ed Palermo and His Big Band; Hot Rats; Roxy. 12/19: Golem; Yoke. 12/21: Crash Test Dummies X-Mas Show. 12/26: Poppa Chubby; Arthur Nelson and Big Ed Sullivan. 12/27: Jim Carroll; Marc Ribot. 12/28: David Johansen and the Harry Smiths. 12/30–12/31: Kim Richey (see box); Buddy and Julie Miller. • 15 W. 4th St. (212-228-6300).

★ Bowery Ballroom
12/19–12/21: Interpol. 12/27: El-P (see box); Aesop Rock; Mr. Lif; RJD2. 12/30–12/31: Patti Smith. • 6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111).

Irving Plaza
12/27–12/29: They Might Be Giants. • 17 Irving Pl. (212-777-6800).

★ Joe's Pub
12/26: Groove Collective. 12/27: Metro Area. • 425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200).

★ Knitting Factory
12/19: Piebald; Elliott; Koufax; My Chemical Romance. 12/20: Rouge: The New Bohemian Cabaret. 12/21–12/25: "Jewsapalooza." 12/26: The Movielife; the Reunion Show; Fairweather; After the Bath. 12/28: Davinci's Notebook. 12/29: Catch 22; Big Wig. 12/30: Talking Back Sunday; Cambria. 12/31: Gogol Bordello and friends (see box). • 74 Leonard St. (212-219-3055). $.

Makor
12/21: Frankie y Su Son Vibrante. 12/23: Greg Farm. 12/24: Soulfarm. 12/31: Princess Superstar; My Robot Friend. • 35 W. 67th St. (212-601-1000).

Maxwell's
12/18: Mary Prankster. 12/19: The Lawndarts. 12/20: Lake Trout. 12/21: Smoove; Newborn Naturals. 12/28: No Soap Radio. 12/31: Luna. • 1039 Washington St., Hoboken, N.J. (201-653-1703).

Mercury Lounge
12/18: Hot Socky; Blend Engine; Jason Liebman. 12/19: "Ropeadope" featuring D.J. Logic; Rob Wasserman; more. 12.20–12/21: Lettuce; Garaj Mahal. 12/22: The Memes; the So and So's. 12/27: Tijuana Caravan. 12/28: Holly Golightly; the Sights. 12/29: Actual Proof; Iration Squad; more. 12/30–12/31: Longwave. (See box.) • 217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700).

★ Northsix
12/18: Scout; Inouk. 12/19: Les Savy Fav; Panthers. 12/20: Beans; Mike Ladd. 12/21: Ladybug Transistor. 12/28: Fiery Furnaces; Natural History. 12/31: Har Mar Superstar. • 66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103).

S.O.B.'s
12/18–12/19: Common. 12/20: Carimi. 12/21: Brazilian All-Stars. 12/23: Yomo Toro. 12/26: Dead Prez. 12/27: Jeremy James; Sonny Boy. 12/28: Brazilian All-Stars. 12/29: King Angelo. 12/30: Jimmy Bosch and Salsa Dura. • 204 Varick St. (212-243-4940).

The Village Underground
12/19: Red Wanting Blue; Justin Trantr; Blow Up Hollywood; Luxury. 12/29: The Klezmatics. • 130 W. 3rd St. (212-777-7745).

"Warsaw"
12/20–12/21: Arthur "Love" Lee. • Polish National Home, 261 Driggs Ave., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (toll free, 866-468-7619).

Clubs

★ APT
Mondays: "The Minty Fresh Living Room" with

Ground Rules In clubland, promptness is *not* next to godliness; expect shows to start later than promised. Stars (★) indicate our editors' recommendations. $ = cash only.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF COREY PIEHOWICZ.

Bobbito Garcia. Tuesdays: "iPod Party" with AndrewAndrew. Wednesdays: "Little Ricky's Rib Shack" with Rich Medina. Fridays: "Undressed" with Ursula 1000. Saturdays: Chairman Mao and Citizen Kane. 12/19: Kurtis Mantronik. 12/31: King Britt. • 419 W. 13th St. (212-414-4245).

Arc
Fridays: "Be Yourself" with progressive-house maestro D.J. Danny Tenaglia. Saturdays: "Made Saturdays," trance and progressive house spun by the likes of Deep Dish. 12/21: Danny Howells. 12/31: Saeed and Palash. • 6 Hubert St. (212-226-9212).

Centro-Fly
Thursdays: Eclectic music with "?"; Fridays: "GBH" hosts some of the more adventurous nights at the club with D.J.'s like Ashley Beedle and Marshall Jefferson. • 45 W. 21st St. (212-627-7770).

Luxx
Fridays: "Mutants" with D.J. Larry Tee. Saturdays: Tee spins electroclash at "Berliniamsburg." Sundays: "House Music Sessions" with D.J. Raji K and D.J. Gomi. Mondays: "Cult Movie Mondays." Tuesdays: D.J. Miss Guy spins rock and metal at "Hell Bent for Brooklyn." • 256 Grand Street, Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-1000).

The Roxy
Saturdays: The Chelsea boys dance all night to a rotating set of house D.J.'s, including Razor, of Razor and Guido. • 515 W. 18th St. (212-627-0404). $.

Spa
Wednesdays: Rock and roll and electro spun by D.J.'s like Paul Sevigny. Thursdays: A-listers and fashionistas take over with "Ultra" featuring hip-hop, house, and rock and roll spun by D.J.'s Mark Ronson, Lady Bunny, Cameron Douglas. Saturdays: Overdressed Euros line up for "Jet Set" with D.J. Eric LaPeau. • 76 E. 13th St. (212-388-1060).

Jazz

★ Birdland
Mondays from 5:30 to 7:30: Scott Whitfield Jazz Orchestra. Tuesdays from 5:30 to 7:30: David Ostwald's Louis Armstrong Centennial Band. Fridays from 5:30 to 7:30: Lew Anderson's All-American Big Band. 12/18–12/21: "Definitive Lee: A Lee Morgan Retrospective." 12/26: Gary Morgan's Panamerica Big Band. 12/27–12/28: John Pizzarelli Trio. 12/31: Kevin Mahogany. • 315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080).

Blue Note
Through 12/22: Jane Monheit. 12/23: Abby Dobson. 12/26: Monday Michiru. 12/27–12/29: Manhattan Transfer. 12/30: Wil Calhoun. 12/31: Chick Corea. • 131 W. 3rd St. (212-475-8592).

Cajun
Mondays and Thursdays: Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks. Tuesdays: Stanley's Washboard Kings. Wednesdays: Eddie Davis and His New Orleans Jazz Band. Fridays: The Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues Band. Saturdays: The Red Onion Jazz Band. Sundays: Peter Eckland Quartet. • 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (212-691-6174).

Iridium
Monday nights, the Les Paul Quartet holds office hours. Through 12/22: Ahmad Jamal. 12/24–12/29: McCoy Tyner Big Band. 12/31: McCoy Tyner Trio. • 1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121).

Jazz Standard
Sets at 7:30 and 9:30. Through 12/22: Ann Hampton Callaway. 12/26–12/29: Winard Harper Sextet. 12/31: Bill Charlap Trio. • 116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232).

Smoke
12/31: Joey DeFrancesco Trio. • 2751 Broadway, at 105th St. (212-864-6662).

Sweet Rhythm
12/18–12/19: The Rhythm Salon. 12/20–12/21: Rene McLean. 12/26, 12/29, and 12/31: Kenny Garrett. • 88 Seventh Ave. So. (212-255-3626).

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★ Tonic
Sundays: "Klezmer Sundays." 12/18: Sylvie Courvoisier and Tim Berne Duo. 12/19: Regina Spektor; Smokey Hormel. 12/20: D.J. Logic. 12/21: Jane Ira Bloom Trio. 12/26: Brandon Ross and Stomu Takeshi. 12/27–12/28: Henry Threadgill's Zoiid. 12/31: John Zorn's Electric Masada; Marc Ribot; Yuka Honda. • 107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503). $.

Village Vanguard
Mondays in December: The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra swings on. Through 12/22: Jackie McLean with the Cedar Walton Trio. 12/24–12/29: Cedar Walton Quartet. 12/31–1/5: Dr. Michael White's Original Liberty Jazz Band of New Orleans. • 178 Seventh Ave. So. (212-255-4037). $.

Comedy

Carolines on Broadway
Mondays: "New Talent Night," hosted by Eddie Brill. 12/19–12/22: Jamie Kennedy. 12/26–12/28: David Alan Grier. 12/31: Mike Birbiglia; Mitch Fatel; Russ Meneve; Patrice O'Neal; Rich Vos. • 1626 Broadway, nr. 49th St. (212-757-4100). $12.50–$24.50, two-drink minimum.

Comedy Cellar
Through 12/22: Colin Quinn; Mitch Fatel; Robert Kelly; Godfrey; Sherrod Small. 12/23–12/29: Colin Quinn; Ellen Cleghorne; Robert Kelly; Godfrey; Tom Papa. 12/30–1/5: Colin Quinn; Mitch Fatel; Robert Kelly; Godfrey; Sherrod Small. • 117 MacDougal St. (212-254-3480).

Dangerfield's
Through 12/22: Sherrod Small; Steve Marshall; Steve Byrne; Carrie Karavas; Gregory Vacarello; Jessica Kirson. 12/31: Jim Norton; Al Ducharme; Greg Rogell; more. • 1118 First Ave., nr. 61st St. (212-593-1650).

Surf Reality
First Friday of every month: "The Vim Variety Show." First Saturday of every month: "The Carmen Mofongo Show." • 172 Allen St. (212-673-4182).

Cabaret

★ Cafe Carlyle
Mondays through 12/30: Eddy Davis New Orleans Jazz Band featuring Woody Allen. Tuesdays through Saturdays through 12/31: Bobby Short. • Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600).

Don't Tell Mama
Thursdays in December at 6: "Seth's Broadway Chatterbox." Saturdays at 8:30: Ron Poole's "Poole Party!" Saturdays at 11: Tommy Femia and Christine Pedi in "Judy Garland and Liza Minnelli Live!" • 343 W. 46th St. (212-757-0788). $.

★ Feinstein's at the Regency
Through 12/28: Michael Feinstein. $30 food-and-beverage minimum for all shows. • 540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-307-4100 or 212-339-4095).

FireBird Café
Through 12/28: Chris Barrett performs Wednesdays through Saturdays. • 365 W. 46th St. (212-586-0244). $15 food-and-drink minimum.

Judy's
12/18: Leonard McKenzie in "Lennie's Holiday Show. 12/19: David Sabella. 12/20–12/21: Julie Reyburn in "Blackbird." 12/24: Judy's Chelsea Annual Christmas Sing-Along. 12/31: The Lounge-O-Leers. • 169 Eighth Ave., nr. 18th St. (212-929-5410).

The New Year

Ring It On

GYPSY GROOVE: Gogol Bordello, at the Knitting Factory on New Year's Eve.

Thank—or blame, depending on your point of view—the recession, terrorism jitters, and a Millennium Eve that went bust for the numerous, mostly inexpensive and low-key events scheduled for New Year's in 2002. This year, there's a nice mix of jam bands, country music, and rock, in contrast to last year's overpaid D.J.'s in overpriced rooms. It's no utopia, but it's a lot more than one can ask for on this most tricky of nights. (See listings for details.) E.B.

The Group	The Scoop
Phish Madison Square Garden	The godfathers of the jam are back after a short absence. This show, of course, has long been sold out, but those hoping for a miracle can stand outside the Garden, bootleg tapes in hand to trade to ticket holders.
Longwave Mercury Lounge	Cute like the Strokes, yes, but these New York rockers are anthemic in the style of Pearl Jam. A recent record deal with RCA will allow them to realize their mainstream ambitions. Fifties-rock savants the Realistics will open.
Karl Denson's Tiny Universe B.B. King Blues Club & Grill	Those shut out of Phish at MSG will probably head to B.B. King's to catch the other titans of the jam-band scene, a group led by a sax prodigy who once played with Lenny Kravitz but now brings a jazz and funk sensibility to the jammers' freewheeling groove.
Gogol Bordello Knitting Factory	Chaotic rockers who cram in a whole number of odd concepts, including performance art, Beck-ish irony, gypsy music, situationist theory, and punk. The live show, however, is reportedly heavier on theatrics than on theory.
Joey DeFrancesco Trio Smoke	Organist DeFrancesco brings a verve for the work of storied keyboard players past, like Jimmy Smith, to albums like *Ballads and Blues*.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN FALLON.

TheMix

Edited by Boris Kachka

Radio Highlights

"The Downtown Messiah"
Handel's holiday standard gets the hipster treatment via covers by Dar Williams, Marshall Crenshaw, Randy Brecker, and others. • 12/20 at 2 P.M. WFUV, 90.7 FM.

"Spinning on Air Christmas Show"
A special episode of David Garland's music show features eccentric renditions of holiday tunes and satires on seasonal marketing. • 12/20 at 9 P.M. WNYC, 93.9 FM.

Studio 360: "Harmony"
Host Kurt Andersen enlists jazz pianist Fred Hersch to help explore the rules of harmony in the arts, whether they're followed slavishly, reshaped—as by Shoenberg—or domesticated, as by interior designers. • 12/21 at 10 A.M. WNYC, 93.9 FM and 12/22 at 7 P.M., WNYC 820 AM.

Jonathan Schwartz Christmas Special
The tradition Schwartz started 32 years ago at WNEW continues here, with performances and banter from jazz and cabaret stars. • 12/22, noon to 4 P.M. WNYC, 93.9 FM.

"The Lewis Burke Frumkes Show"
The eponymous host of the author-interview program talks to Michael Faber, author of *The Crimson Petal and the White*, the Sunday before Christmas and to *The Piano Tuner* author Daniel Mason the following week. • 12/22 (Faber) and 12/29 (Mason) at 8 P.M. WPAT, 930 AM.

Paul Winter's Solstice Celebrations Retrospective
WFUV's Pete Fornatale gets together with WNYC host Paul Schaefer to broadcast the annual solstice concert at St. John the Divine and remember past celebrations going back 22 years. • 12/23 at 9 P.M. on WFUV, 90.7 FM; 12/31 at 10 P.M. on WNYC, 93.9 FM.

"A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols"
Minnesota Public Radio's Michael Barone introduces a British service conceived more than 80 years ago to improve on the standard Anglican liturgy and broadcast over public radio for more than twenty years. • 12/24 at 10 A.M. and 12/25 at 9 P.M. WNYC, 93.9 FM.

"A New Yorker's Christmas"
"New York at Night" host Nimet Habachy carries on a 21-year-old Christmas Eve tradition with a narrated tour of holiday music and holiday places throughout New York neighborhoods. • 12/24 at 8 P.M. WQXR, 96.3 FM.

Lectures and Panels

Maya Plisetskaya
The legendary Russian ballet dancer introduces the premiere screening of a biopic about her. • 12/18 at 4 P.M. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Bruno Walter Auditorium, 111 Amsterdam Ave., at 65th St. (212-642-0142); free tickets distributed two hours earlier.

"A View From the Bridge"
Soprano Catherine Malfitano and baritone Kim Josephson talk about performing in the Met's latest opera. • 12/18 at 6:15 P.M. Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, tenth fl. (212-769-7028); $15.

"Time Travel: Fantasy or Reality?"
J. Richard Gott, the Princeton astrophysicist who wrote *Time Travel in Einstein's Universe*, gives a lecture illustrated with film clips on the theoretical possibilities opened up by Einstein's work. • 12/18 at 7 P.M. American Museum of Natural History, 2 W. 77th St. (212-769-5200); $15.

"Does Russia Remember the Holocaust?"
London professor John D. Klier, an expert on Jewish history, gives an illustrated talk on Moscow's new World War II museum and the (sometimes circumspect) ways it deals with the Holocaust. • 12/18 at 7:30 P.M. Center for Jewish History, 15 W. 16th St. (212-246-6080); free.

William Kentridge on Bruce Naumann
Kentridge, a South African multimedia artist, lectures on his American contemporary, Naumann, who was recently exhibited at Dia. • 12/19 at 6:30 P.M. Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. (212-989-5566); $6.

The Written Word

F. Paul Wilson and Sarah Smith
Two experienced authors read from recent work as part of the bar's "Fantastic Fiction" series. • 12/18 at 7 P.M. KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (212-505-3360); free.

***Open City 16* Party**
Writers for the latest issue of the lit journal celebrate with editors and admirers. • 12/18 at 7 P.M. Pioneer Bar, 218 Bowery (212-334-0484); $10 includes drinks and a free copy.

Joyce Carol Oates
Oates appears at the season finale reading of Food for Thought, watching Tammy Grimes perform Oates's one-act, *Dr. Magic*. • 12/19 at 1 P.M. National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park So. (212-362-2560); $38 includes box lunch.

Jason Flores-Williams
The young author reads from his recent book, *The Last Stand of Mr. America*, at the Detroit-themed Motor City bar. • 12/19 at 6 P.M. 127 Ludlow St. (212-358-1595); free.

Interracial Writers
Writers published in Sheryl Levart's Face to Face Press read from their works at the café-nightclub. • 12/19 at 7:30 P.M. Halcyon, 227 Smith St. (718-260-WAXY); free.

Fiction Live
A series of fiction readings from *The New Yorker*'s pages continues with Richard Dreyfuss doing Jeffrey Eugenides's "Baster" and other actors reading David Foster Wallace's "Asset" and Tobias Wolff's "Bullet in the Brain." Proceeds go to Art Start, which helps low-income New York students through the arts. • 12/19 at 8 P.M. Shine, 285 W. Broadway (www.ticketweb.com); $15.

Cocktail Hour Theatre
A special evening installment of Food for Thought—and the last event of the year for the lunchtime series—features a performance of Lucille Fletcher's one-act *Sorry Wrong Number*. • 12/20 at 6 P.M. National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park So. (212-362-2560); $40.

William Carlos Williams and Improv
A typically rollicking evening begins with Laura Wiley leading a reading of Williams's "Paterson," followed by a one-man show from Lyaba at 7:30, an open-mike slam emceed by club owner Bob Holman at 8:30, and Galinsky's improv poetry at nine. • 12/23 at 5:45 P.M. Bowery Poetry Club, 308 Bowery (212-614-0505); free.

Special Events

Tours

Santa and New York
The staple of sidewalks, department stores, and the Thanksgiving parade owes a great deal to locals like Washington Irving and Thomas Nast. See where they and others helped popularize the harbinger of commodified Christmas. • 12/21 and 12/22 at noon and 2:30 P.M. (Call 212-465-3331 for reservations and meeting place); $13.

Historic Taverns
Toast all the holidays with hot wassails, cider ale, and Christmas spirits at watering holes decked out for the season. • 12/21, 12/22, 12/28, and 12/29 at 5:15 P.M. (Call 212-465-3331 for reservations and meeting place); $13.

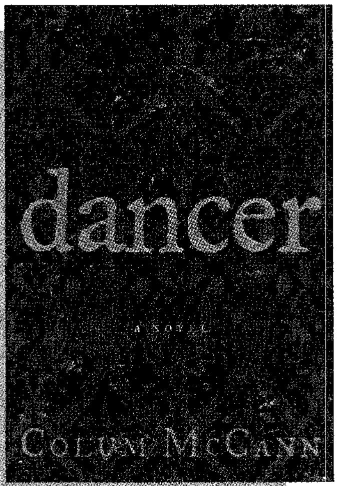
Little Odessa
Take a winter walk through Brighton Beach where sun, surf, and Slavs are still abundant. The tour ends with an optional lunch at a typical Russian restaurant. • 12/22, meet at 2:15 P.M. at the northwest corner of Brighton Beach and Coney Island Ave. (212-265-2663); $5, $7 lunch.

Christmas Day Jewish East Side
Forget the movies. Explore local Jewish history. (See box.) • 12/25 at 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M. Meet at the southeast corner of Essex and Delancey Sts. (212-439-1090); $12.

In Print

Private Dancer

"I like the idea of people who cross boundaries and make home wherever they happen to be," says novelist **Colum McCann**, "the sort of bastards of the world. Well, maybe that applies doubly to Rudolf Nureyev." Casting about after his last book, McCann found himself drawn to the fiery (and not very nice) dancer who was as famous for defecting from the Soviet Union as for his feet. His new book, *Dancer* (Metropolitan; $26), has a bastardized form, too—it's a fictionalized biography. McCann emphasizes the fiction. "The one thing I didn't want to do was write a biography," he says. "I didn't want to feel tied down by what people might call 'truth.' " McCann deliberately avoided interviewing anyone who'd known Nureyev. Instead, he traveled and read extensively, doing the kind of immersive research that made *This Side of Brightness*, his novel about New York subway-tunnel dwellers, so intimately real. McCann spent weeks in the remote industrial town of Ufa, where Nureyev was born, impoverished and isolated, in 1938. *Dancer* begins with a detailed description of the horrors of World War II's Eastern Front in winter, and ends before both the Soviet collapse and Nureyev's 1993 death from AIDS. "I didn't want to take out the violins," says McCann. "But to evoke the spirit of the times was very important to me." What would the brilliant, petulant performer have made of McCann's odd project? "He probably would have said, 'What a load of horseshit this is!' But I actually think he might have gotten a kick out of it, too." B.K.



POOR RUDOLF: McCann's novel traces Nureyev's journey from poverty to renown.

Jewish Borough Park
Take a Christmas walk through the country's largest Hasidic community. (See box.) • 12/25 at 11 A.M. (Call 212-415-5500 for reservations and meeting place); $22.

"The Gangs of New York"
Miramax co-sponsors a tour of what remains of Five Points and the storied past covered in Herbert Asbury's 1927 classic *The Gangs of New York*—the basis for Scorsese's movie. Stops include Paradise Square, "Murderer's Alley," and the sites of some of the nineteenth century's greatest riots. • 12/28 at 1 P.M. Meet at City Hall Park, corner of Broadway and Chambers St. (212-439-1090); $12.

Brooklyn Bridge New Year Walk
Enjoy a great vantage point for seeing fireworks in Staten Island, Brooklyn, Central Park, and New Jersey while learning about the bridge's history and toasting 2003 over the water. • 12/31 at 11 P.M. Meet at Blimpie's, 38 Park Row (888-377-4455); $25.

"New Year's New World"
Take a guided tour of Ellis Island via covered, heated ferry. Forget auld acquaintance by remembering how so many people began new lives overnight. • 12/31 at noon. Meet at the Immigrant Statue, Castle Clinton, Battery Park (212-439-1090 for required reservations); $12.

New Year's Eve Jaunt
Enjoy some of the cheapest New Year's entertainment around with a Chinatown tour that hits all the major cultural institutions and includes an optional dinner for next to nothing. • 12/31 at 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 P.M. (Call 212-265-2663 for reservations and meeting place); $5, dinner $10.

Benefits

"Blunt Speaking" Benefit
Actor Corin Redgrave gives a benefit performance of his one-man show about Cambridge don and Soviet spy Sir Anthony Blunt, with proceeds going to the anti-war group Not in Our Name. • 12/18 at 2 P.M. Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. (212-221-7300); $10 to $30.

"Joyous Christmas" Benefit Concert
Soprano Sylvia McNair and the St. Bartholomew's Boy and Girl Choristers perform holiday carols, excerpts from *Messiah,* and a new composition, "Carol Sequence—Past Three O'Clock," to benefit City-meals-on-Wheels. • 12/18 at 7:30 P.M. St. Bartholomew's, 109 E. 50th St. (212-378-0248); $50 to $150.

Exhibits

"Stronger Than Ever: NYPD Responds"
Never-before-seen photographs, video, interviews, and artifacts recovered from ground zero (some of them on loan from victims' families) are gathered here in tribute to the 23 New York City officers killed on September 11. • Through 1/5/03. New York City Police Museum, 100 Old Slip, at Water St. (212-480-3100); $5.

"Theater.Ink: The Art of Sam Norkin"
Sixty years of New York City's cultural history—from Hitchcock to *Hairspray*—have been documented in Norkin's renowned caricatures in newspapers and magazines. His creations are on display well into the new year. • Through 1/18/03. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 40 Lincoln Center Plaza (212-870-1630); free.

Holiday Garden and Train Show
Reaching across two galleries, the annual show is more than child's play, with 1,000 feet of large-gauge track and intricate re-creations of city scenes and newly added landmarks. • Through 1/5/03. The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx River Pkwy. at Fordham Rd. (718-817-8700); $10.

"Canadian Comedy"
The "O Canada!" series continues with some Lorne Michaels–related work, including an episode of *The Hart & Lorne Terrific Hour* and the documentary *Same Guys, New Dresses,* which follows the 2000 reunion tour of the Kids in the Hall. • 12/24 through 1/5/03. Museum of Television & Radio, 25 W.52nd St. (212-621-6800); $10.

"Romantic Germans: Beethoven to Strauss"
Rare photos, autographs, and memorabilia attest to the golden age of German opera. • Through 1/4/03. Gallery at Lincoln Center, Concourse Level (212-580-4673); free.

"Freedom: A History of US"
Rare photos and artifacts are included in a wide-ranging exhibit covering the nation's history through World War II. • 12/10 through 1/26/03. The New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St. (212-873-3400); $6.

Other Events

Grand Central Holiday Light Show and Fair
The annual fair offers gift bargains while the light show on the starry dome now has six innovative projections. • Fair through 12/24, Lights through 12/31. Grand Central Station, Park Ave. at 42nd St. (grandcentralterminal.com); free.

"Fêtes de Noël"
The city's Parisian-style Bryant Park bites off another French tradition—seasonal outdoor shopping—hosting dozens of artisans, booths from Ellis Island and the Natural History museum, and weekend entertainment, music, and readings. • Through 12/24. Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. (212-472-1522); free.

מענדל מוכר ספרים
Bar Mitzvah Sets
Sefer Torahs
ANTIQUE JUDAICA
45 ESSEX ST

STEP RIGHT UP: An Essex Street stairway advertises another era's holiday gifts, on Big Onion's tour.

Happenings

Just Another Day

Maybe you usually take a long weekend, and this year's awkward timing makes that difficult. Or maybe you're just looking for something more fulfilling than Sandra Bullock and General Tso to make your Christmas Day memorable. What's a Jew to do? Two thoughtful tours promise to bring the day's un-chosen people a little closer to their roots. **Jewish Borough Park** has nary a hanging light or sidewalk Santa; historian Robert Furman helps explore the largest Hasidic community in America. And though Manhattan's black-hatted tailors have mostly fled, the ghosts of Judaism past still populate the tenements, synagogues, and factory buildings on Big Onion's twelfth annual **Christmas Day Jewish East Side Tour**—from the building where *The Forward* was born to the lovingly restored Eldridge Street Synagogue. Then sneak over to Little Italy to see how the other half lives. (See "Tours.")

Holiday Night Out
The Lower East Side's chi-chi boutiques stay open late, offering discounts, fashion shows, and giveaways while four area nightspots host music, D.J.'s, readings, and theater in addition to free beer. • 12/19, events at 8 P.M., stores open until 9 P.M. Around Orchard St. bet. Houston and Canal Sts. (Call 212-226-9010 for details); free.

Holiday Crafts New York
Seventy-five carefully selected craft artists from across the country display blown glass, jewels, wood, ceramics, and crafty fashions. • 12/20, 3 to 9 P.M.; 12/21, 10 A.M. to 6 P.M.; and 12/22, 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. Alfred Lerner Hall, Columbia University, Broadway at 114th St. (800-649-0279); $6.

Mama Donna's 28th Annual Winter Solstice
Urban shaman Donna Henes takes you on a journey to Staten Island's mysterious and spiritual South Beach, where she leads a "ceremony to invoke the female forces in the universe present in all people." Help her welcome the new season with drums, bright clothes, and glittery baubles (bring your own). • 12/21 at 6 P.M. Meet on the bus under the arch at Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn (Reservations strongly recommended at 718-857-2247); $35.

Kwanzaa Festival
Dance, drumming, storytelling, jazz, and the spoken word greet visitors to the museum's Kwanzaa Marketplace, featuring more than a dozen merchants hawking African, Latin, and Caribbean crafts and goods. • 12/28, noon to 6 P.M. American Museum of natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100); free with $12 admission.

Sports

Lights in the Heights
A cold but well-lit bike ride heads down to the "miracle mile" of Christmas lights in Dyker Heights, Brooklyn. • 12/20 at 4 P.M. Meet by City Hall, corner of Chambers and Centre Sts., or at 4:45 P.M. at Prospect Park W. and 3rd St., Brooklyn (212-802-8222); free.

Bishop Loughlin Games
Some 5,000 athletes from 200 high schools run every distance from 55 to 3,200 meters at the opening of the indoor track season, named for a Brooklyn high school. • 12/21 and 12/22 at 9 A.M. Armory Track & Field Center, 216 Fort Washington Ave., at 168th St. (718-857-2700, ext. 2233); $5.

Holiday Four-Miler and Kids' Play Party
Is it just us, or does a party featuring "races, tug-of-war, parachute games, arts and crafts, holiday treats and surprises" sound more fun than the concurrent adult activity, racing in the cold? Unfortunately, you have to be 2 to 8 years old to romp with the kiddies. • Four-miler: 12/22 at 9:30 A.M. Central Park, East Drive at 99th St. Kids' party: 12/22 at 8:30 A.M. P.S. 198, 95th St. near Lexington Ave. (212-860-4455); $30, $20 members, $7 kids, $5 member kids.

Madison Square Garden Holiday Festival
The fiftieth anniversary of the nation's longest-running holiday college-basketball tournament features St. John's in another New York battle, this time with champ Manhattan College, followed by Iona vs. ACC powerhouse North Carolina. The championship doubleheader takes place the next day. • 12/27 at 6:30 P.M. and 12/28 at 3 P.M. Madison Square Garden, Seventh Ave. and 32nd St. (212-307-7171 or ticketmaster.com); $21.50–$34.50.

Football Sundays at Annie & Co.
The needlepoint shop's pre-feminist notion that women should join sewing circles while men watch football may be in for mixed reactions from today's crafty post-feminists. Die-hard libbers will continue to enjoy blitzes, two-point conversions, and Giant Jeremy Shockey. • 12/29 and every other Sunday at noon; Annie & Co., 1325 Madison Ave., nr. 93rd St. (212-360-7266); $10.

Midnight Run
As midnight strikes along with the hazy realization that you're running a four-miler in pink tights and a clown wig, console yourself with the thought that at least you're not in Times Square. • 12/31, D.J.'s and dancing at 10 P.M., costume contest at 11 P.M., four-miler at midnight. Central Park Bandshell (212-860-4455); $35, $30 members.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD T. NOWITZ/CORBIS.

Kids

Edited by Susan Avery

Events

For Children

White Elephant Sails
Composer Raphael Mostel's musical voyage, *The Travels of Babar*, returns with celebrity narrators. (See box.) • 12/27, 12/28, 12/29 in English; 12/30 in Spanish; 12/31 in French; Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160); $25 and $50.

Miraculous Opera
The Little Orchestra Society's twenty-second annual presentation of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* returns. (See box.) • 12/21 at 11 A.M. and 1 P.M.; Lincoln Center, Avery Fisher Hall (212-971-9500); $10-$35.

Reel Humbug
Lincoln Center's Reel to Real highlights the original Grinch himself, Scrooge, in film and onstage. (See box.) • 12/22 at 11:30 A.M. and 2 P.M.; Lincoln Center, Walter Reade Theater (212-875-5570 or lincolncenter.org); $16.50 grown-ups, $8.50 kids.

The Kid of the Flies
Seven in One Blow, the Brothers Grimm story about a child who deals with a town's misconceptions, is made into a musical by Axis Theatre. (See box.) • Through 12/22; One Sheridan Square (212-807-9300 or axiscompany.org); $10 grown-ups, $5 kids.

Into the Woods
Discover the amazing world growing within trees. Through craftmaking, puppets, role-playing, and a visit to the forest and the live animals of the Alley Pond Environmental Center, kids will find that life beyond the bark is more than just about shelter. Snack included. Preregistration required. • 12/21 from 10 A.M. to noon for 4- and 5-year-olds, 12/22 from 1 to 3 P.M. for 5- and 6-year-olds; Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd., Douglaston (718-229-4000); $16.

My Big Fat Greek Exhibition
Give the kids an early start on the fascinating world of Greek mythology. The Foundation for Hellenic Culture features an art exhibition on loan from the Museum of Greek Children's Art in Athens, a book fair with both Greek and English titles, as well as puppet shows that include the famed winged horse Pegasus. • Through 12/31; Foundation for Hellenic Culture, 7 W. 57th St. (212-308-6908 or foundationhellenicculture.com); free.

Klez for Kids
It's Christmas, so it must be time for a trip to Chinatown. The Eldridge Street Synagogue holds its annual Klezmer concert for kids, which includes a re-creation of a Jewish wedding from the old country. Music, dancing, snacks, and a tour of the synagogue is included. • 12/25 at noon and 2:30 P.M.; Eldridge Street Synagogue, 12 Eldridge St. (212-978-8800 or eldridgestreet.org); $10 grown-ups, $8 students and seniors, $6 kids 11 and younger.

History Repeats Itself
Become an oral historian! Kids interview older friends and family members to learn about history from those who lived it. The workshop, lead by the Significant Elders Intergenerational Project at the New-York Historical Society, teaches the importance of oral history and gives tips on how to keep it going. Recommended for kids ages 6 to 10. • 12/26 at 11 A.M.; New-York Historical Society, 207 W. 76th St. (212-873-3400 or nyhistory.org); $6 grown-ups, $4 students and seniors, free for kids 12 and younger.

A Caribbean Kwanzaa
Pan-Caribbean Dance Theater returns to the New-York Historical Society for the annual Kwanzaa Festival. Learn the holiday's universal principles, dance, and be a part of the interactive holiday workshop. • 12/28 at 11 A.M.; New-York Historical Society, 207 W. 76th St. (212-873-3400 or nyhistory.org); $6 grown-ups, $4 students and seniors, free for kids 12 and younger.

Costume Party for the Dogs
Janet York and her world-famous show dogs put on a demonstration of agility at the Plaza's holiday costume party. Snacks will be an abundance and a magician will entertain. Costume contest winners net a $100 gift certificate at the hotel's gift shop. • 12/19 from 5 to 7 P.M.; The Plaza, Central Park South and 59th St. (212-546-5377); $45 for one grown-up with one kid, $25 for each additional kid.

Sticks and Stones
This month's gallery walk-and-talk at the Museum of Modern Art is "Nature and Architecture." Kids ages 5 to 10 will take a guided tour to learn how the richly varied world of contemporary art and Mother Nature work together. • 12/21 from 10 to 11 A.M., sign-in begins at 9:30 A.M.; MoMA QNS, 33rd St. and Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9805); $5 per family.

Wolf at the Door
Papageno Puppet Theater does *Peter and the Wolf* through the end of the year. Includes Prokofiev's famous composition. • 12/21, 12/22, 12/28, 12/29 at 11:30 A.M. and 1:30 P.M.; The Little Theater in the West End, 2911 Broadway, nr. 113th St. (212-874-3297); $7.

Global Warming
Shake up the holiday season by creating your own musical snow globe at the Sony Wonder Technology Lab. The song "You Are My Sunshine" makes it a heartwarming tchotchke. Or try your hand at assembling a music box. • Snow globe on 12/21, music box on 12/22; drop in any time between 2 and 5 P.M.; Sony Wonder Technology Lab, Madison Ave. and 56th St. (212-833-4698 or sonywondertechlab.com); $10.

An Italian Christmas
Performed in English and Italian, *La Cantata dei Pastori* follows Mary and Joseph on their journey to Bethlehem. The story is intertwined with the comedic antics of two lost souls in the forest and Santa Claus, who emphasizes the whole naughty-nice thing. This seventeenth-century story by Andrea Perrucci includes period costumes and traditional Italian instrumentation. Kids are invited onstage for the final nativity scene. • 12/21 at 8 P.M. and 12/22 at 3 P.M.; St. John the Divine, Synod House, Amsterdam Ave. and 110th St. (212-877-3399); $20, $15 students and seniors, $12 kids.

Babes in Connecticut's Toyland
A full-scale version of *Babes in Toyland* comes to Bridgeport's Playhouse on the Green. Keep time to "March of the Wooden Soldiers" as kids meet the whimsical characters of this beloved seasonal musical. • Through 12/29, plus a New Year's Eve performance at 7:30 P.M.; Playhouse on the Green, 177 State St., Bridgeport, Conn. (203-333-3666 or playhouseonthegreen.org); $25.

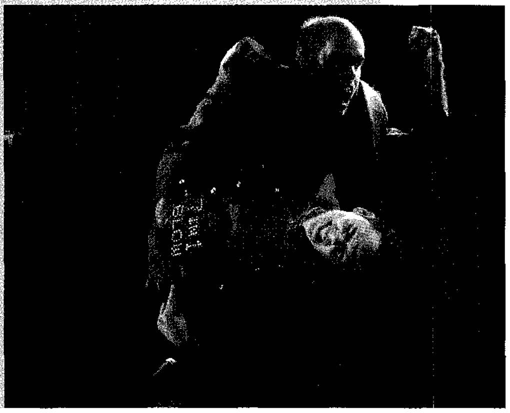
Pooh on Scrooge
A delightful musical, *A Winnie the Pooh Christmas Carol*, comes to the Forum Theatre Company in New Jersey. Pooh characters recreate the roles of Scrooge, Bob Cratchet, Tiny Tim, and the others as they learn the important lessons of kindness and generosity one Christmas Eve. • Through 12/29; Forum Theatre Company, 314 Main St., Metuchen, N.J. (732-548-0582 or forumtheatrecompany.com); $15.

Onstage

It's Showtime, Kids

Winter break breeds family togetherness—and a search for a kids' show that goes beyond the Broadway tourist track. For the littlest ones, **The Travels of Babar** is opening with performances in English, Spanish, and French. The one-hour show uses an eight-piece orchestra, an elaborate slide show of Babar illustrations, and celebrity narrators including Claire Bloom, Jerry Stiller, and Anne Meara. Elementary-school kids can enhance their classical-music education with Gian Carlo Menotti's opera **Amahl and the Night Visitors**. The Little Orchestra Society's version of a disabled boy and the miracle that cures him includes dances and a menagerie of live animals. Take the 'tweens to Lincoln Center for a Scroogefest as Reel to Real presents film excerpts from *A Christmas Carol* and *A Muppets Christmas* along with a live performance of **Scrooge: the Musical**. (Audience members will be invited onstage to decorate a Victorian-style Christmas tree.) And finally, Axis, an eight-year-old downtown theater company, opens its first kids' show, **Seven in One Blow**. The Grimm story—about a city kid who kills seven flies with a single rag but must deal with people's misconceptions about the feat—includes a handful of original songs, big-screen video, and audience participation to vanquish a mean witch. Artistic director Randy Sharp, who's directed Shakespeare and Beckett, thought a change was long overdue. "I wasn't too excited about the idea of doing *Sleeping Beauty* or *Robin Hood*, so I started reading fairy tales," she explains. "We decided to do it because we thought it would be a complete blast to indulge in fantasies." Welcome to childhood. (See "Events.") S.A.

PLAY DATE: The ogre of *Seven in One Blow* learns that you don't always have to show how strong you are.



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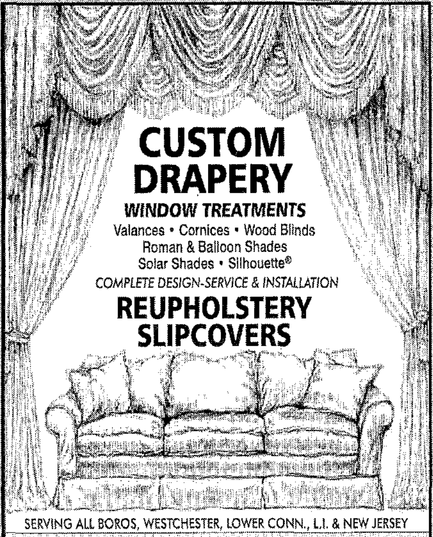

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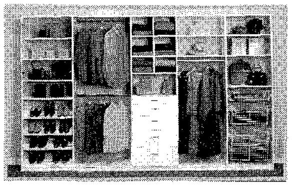

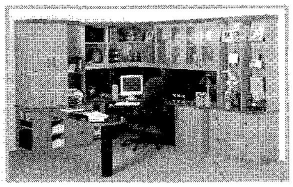

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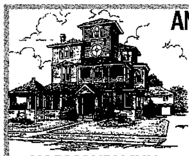

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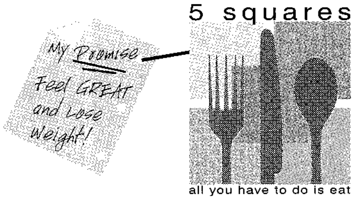

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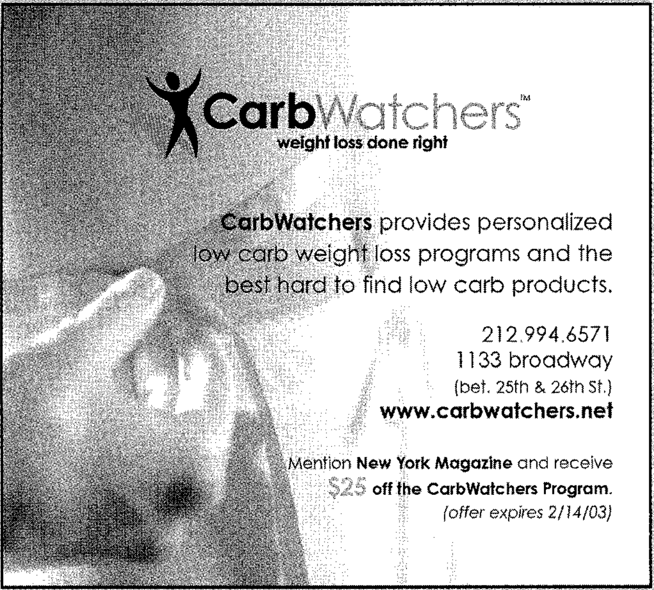

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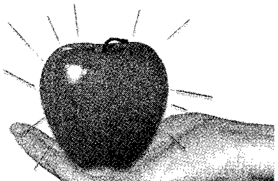

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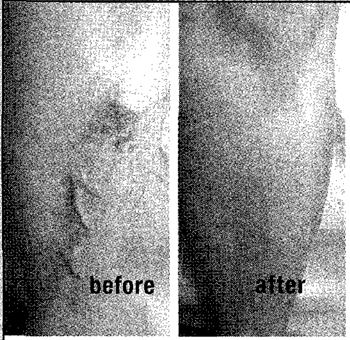

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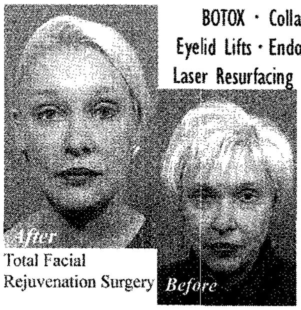

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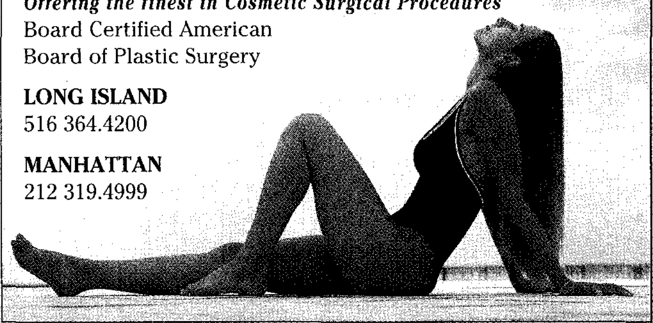

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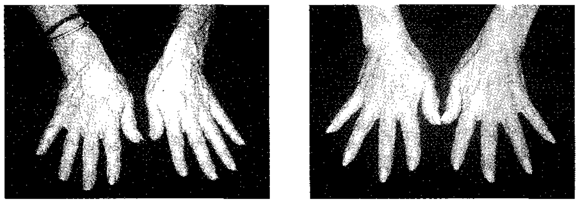

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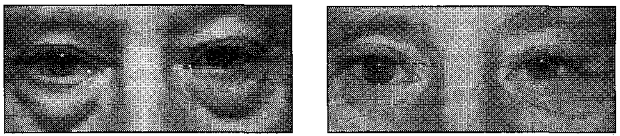

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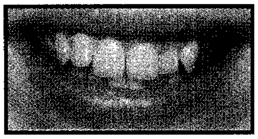

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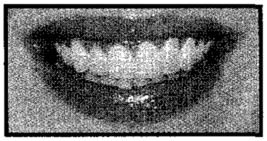

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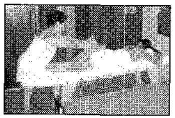

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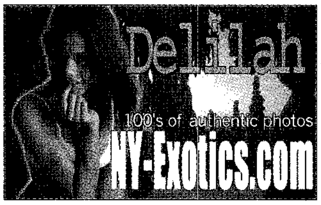
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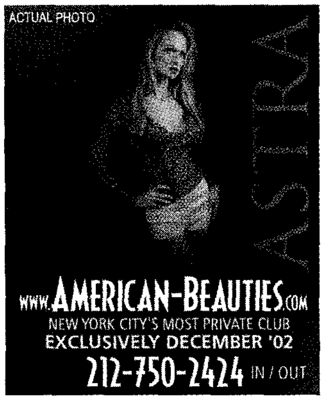

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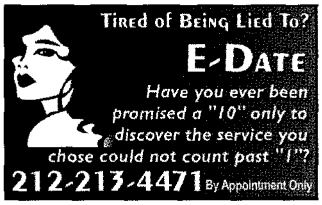

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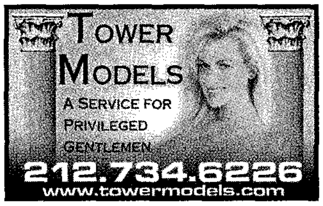

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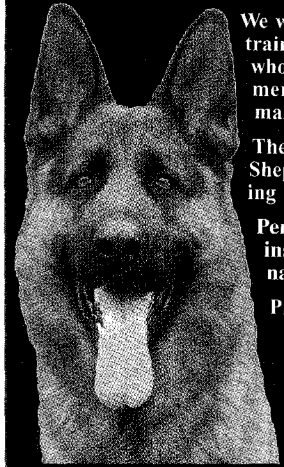

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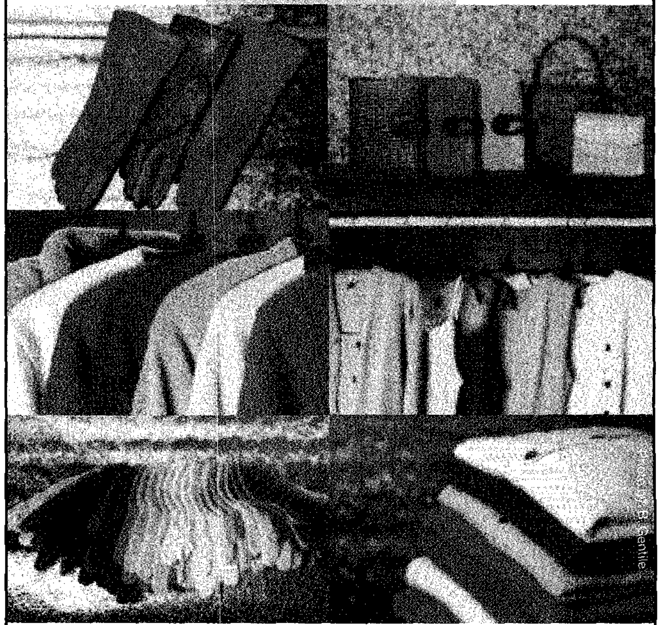

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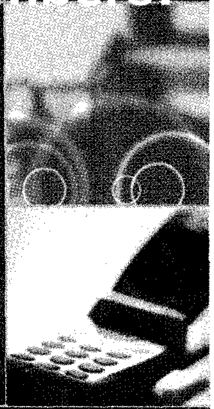

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Sleepless In New York—Vivacious, Rubenesque, stunning, elegant brunette, young 48, single Jewish female who is accomplished, articulate, professional, residing in Manhattan. You will adore this intelligent, enchanting treasure who is beautiful both inside and out. I am desirous of an affectionate, kind, sophisticated, prominent, monogamous man with integrity, who has a playful and loving soul, over 38, 5'10" plus and a nonsmoker, to be my soul mate. Please forward your note/photo/phone number. SweetSuzNyc@aol.com 3389 ✉☎

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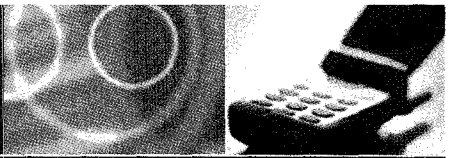

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Looking To Get Married—Jewish male, 48, enjoys movies, dining, the gym. Seeks pretty, sweet female, 30-45. Photo. 3405 ✉☎

Caring Man To Meet Best Friend—Youthful, attractive, divorced Jewish MD, early 60s, seeks divorced Jewish professional woman in 50s - (203), (914), (212) - for culture, travel, dining, hanging, long-term relationship. Note/recent photo. 3369 ✉☎

Handsome Jewish Professor—And physician, seeks female counterpart, 30-45 years, nonsmoker. Photo. 3384 ✉

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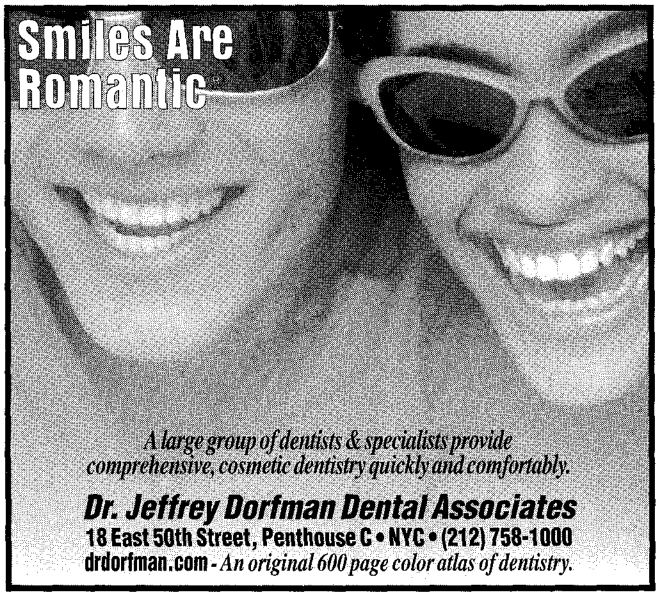

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Green-Eyed—Slender, extremely pretty, PhD-level female seeks adventurous, athletic male, 46-56. Ivy preferred. 3412 ✉☎

Very Attractive—Gay, white, feminine/aggressive female, 39, 5'6", voluptuous and fit, self-employed, kind. Enjoys outdoors, fine dining and more. Seeks pretty, white, feminine, together woman, 36-43, for fun/friendship/more... Only NYC to LI. Nonsmoker. Note/photo. Spencerchance@aol.com 3408 ✉

Reared In Texas—Sophisticated, elegant, chic city girl retains Southern charm - has many interests, intellectual curiosity, integrity and beauty, 5'5", size 6. Seeks Jewish man, 50s-60s, who is honest, nonsmoker, worldly, highly successful, articulate and athletic. Photo a must. 3407 ✉

Gay, Handsome Man—Sensitive, sincere and sensuous, young, in-shape 60, alone by loss, wishes a new beginning by sharing theater, ballet and travel with good-looking, affectionate and caring man. Letter and photo, please. 3395 ✉☎

Soul Mate Wanted—Handsome, successful executive, 53, Jewish Renaissance man, seeks sensitive, attractive woman to share a loving and lasting relationship. Photo, please. 3372 ✉☎

Romantic, Handsome CEO—49, 6', 175 lbs, seeks lady, 30-45, with beauty, brains and a warm heart. Photo, please. 3383 ✉☎

Cute, Fun, Semi-Sane—Nice guy with a good heart - loves good conversation, into sports and travel, tall, rugged, 52, seeks passionate, direct, down-to-earth woman with a great smile. 3402 ✉☎

TV Producer—Male, 46, 6', 185, cute, has it all except for leading lady. Photo. 3396 ✉

Mensch Seeks Menschette—Youthful, energetic 55, single white male, warm, witty, romantic, well-educated, caring, seeks single white female, 35-45, with similar qualities - and attractive. Photo a must. 3404 ✉☎

Chinese Beauty—Attractive, 40s, youthful, outgoing, personable, seeks intelligent, together gentleman for long-term relationship. Please be baggage-free, fun, happy, financially secure. Recent photo with phone and note. 3376 ✉☎

Marriage And Family—Adorable, happy lady, 52, from rich, affluent family - would like to marry a rich, honest man, 42-49, who loves children. I had a baby girl just recently - thanks to special fertility treatment. Seeking future husband who also wants two or three kids. Simply searching for a sincere, wealthy man who tells the truth - and desires a family life style. Mutual prenuptial agreement is essential. POB 262, NYC 10116

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Sad When Mondale Lost?—You could be happy with me! Good-looking/hearted, slim, passionate single female writer, 44, seeks good-looking, uncynical, kind, nonsmoking man, 30-50ish, for lifelong love/little Democrats. 3401 ✉☎

Tall, Handsome, Intelligent—Arts professional, 46, affectionate, sensitive, creative, possessing sense of humor and depth of character, seeking naturally pretty, slender, down-to-earth woman, Christian (nonreligious) under 40, with intellect and originality to share galleries, flea markets, laughter, creative pursuits, country weekends, breakfast in bed and long-term relationship. Note/phone/photo. 3411 ✉☎

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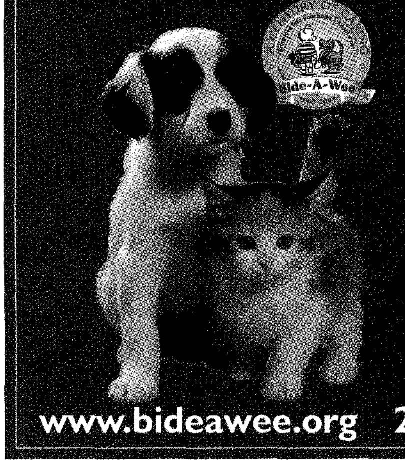

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NAKED CITY AMY SOHN

THREE AMIGOS

After Adam broke off with Colin, he figured they'd just be friends, but then he met Colin's new boyfriend. Who says three's a crowd?

A FEW YEARS AGO, A cute 30-year-old television producer named Adam met a grad student named Colin at an East Village gay bar called IC Guys. They started dating, enjoying a sparky, playful relationship. "We liked to get each other's goat," Adam recalls, "which created huge sexual energy. We were like David and Maddie on *Moonlighting*." But despite their mutual affection, they decided they were better off as friends.

> "It was fulfilling and fun, and then I got to go home and sleep in my own bed."

Normally, that's where the story would end. But one year later, Adam got a call from Colin's new boyfriend, Jimmy, inviting him to a surprise birthday party for Colin on the roof of the Hotel Shelburne. When Adam met Jimmy, he immediately found him very attractive. "I said, 'Nice to meet you,' " Adam recalls. "Jimmy said, 'Really nice to meet you.' " Once the birthday boy showed up, he and Adam chatted extensively, enjoying the chance to catch up, and when the hotel bar closed, a group of guys decided to continue the party at a midtown bar, Tenth Avenue Lounge.

Before leaving, Adam and Colin went downstairs to use the bathroom. "We were finally alone, talking," says Adam, "and of course, since he had a boyfriend, I was more interested in him because I couldn't have him. We were flirting, and we made out in the bathroom, kind of pressed up against the wall, sexy. I said, 'Your boyfriend is really cute,' and he said, 'Yeah.' It was playful, in a 'We're so bad' kind of way."

This wasn't the first time other men had been interested in Jimmy. "I never felt possessive," says Colin, 27. "But I wondered if everyone was using me to get to him."

When Colin and Adam emerged from the bathroom, they joined an unsuspecting Jimmy and a fourth guy, and split a cab uptown. The Fourth Wheel sat in the front seat next to the cabbie while Adam, Jimmy, and Colin sat in the back, Jimmy in the middle. Someone had given Colin a huge bouquet of rainbow balloons, and there were so many that they blocked the three men from the view of the front seat and the side windows.

Turned on by the secret bathroom make-out, Adam flirted with Jimmy, and then Colin began going down on Jimmy. As he did, Jimmy turned to Adam and the two started kissing. "Colin looks up from what he's doing," Adam recalls, "sees us, and says, 'Oh.' It was an 'I caught you guys' look."

"Jimmy and I had never done anything like that before," Colin remembers. "He had done that in another couple, and he and his boyfriend ended up breaking up right afterwards. But I was excited."

As the make-out got more intense, they started giggling, loudly enough to alert Fourth Wheel, who asked through the wall of balloons what was going on. At the Tenth Avenue Lounge, the guys went into a back room and continued their make-out session, joined by Fourth Wheel and some other guests. Eventually, a group of five went back to Colin's apartment and got naked.

Over the next seven months, the Try-Anything Trio got together another half-dozen times. "We would run into each other at bars," Adam remembers. "It was all kismet. It was never too planned. That's why it happened for such a long time: because it didn't happen very often."

One night, Jimmy and Colin ran into Adam at a bar in the East Village. "It seemed like it was going to happen again," says Colin, "and he said no. I had just returned from a trip and Jimmy was going on one, and Adam said, 'The two of you should be together.' We thought it was such a gentlemanly thing to do that we attacked him on 3rd Street against a chain-link fence and sent him on his way."

When Adam's birthday rolled around in the spring, the three fooled around in his bedroom on a pile of coats while another couple watched from the doorway in shock. Often, the morning after they hooked up with Adam, the couple would cocoon. "We would always spend some time together, just the two of us," says Colin.

The final interlude took place at Colin's house that spring, which was the first time penetration was involved. Colin and Jimmy wound up having sex, with Adam directing

Sex Appeals By Michael Crawford

"Oh, you know, the usual: work, flirt, work, flirt."

them and interacting with both. Once it happened, Adam says, "it felt played out. We had already gotten through all the fun stuff—wondering whether we were going to kiss, the thrill of the hunt, wondering how far we would go. But the final time was fulfilling a perfunctory fantasy."

Beyond that, he felt he could see the dynamic between Jimmy and Colin in a way he had not been able to before: "I felt like I was watching a part of their relationship. They were into the sex, but then they became uninterested in it and each other. It suddenly became less sexy, more rote, even though I was there."

"From what I remember about that time," says Colin, "it was great."

Colin and Jimmy wound up breaking up a few months later. Colin doesn't think the triangu-dating sped up the breakup, but he does think the competitiveness between him and Jimmy was a problem: "Jimmy liked to be the center of attention and was very good-looking. He had a pathological need to be liked, and it would come through in all situations."

Adam says that at the beginning, he had a thought of stealing Jimmy away from Colin, but it faded quickly. What he liked about being the third man was the freedom to come and go: "It's like being a grandparent. You don't have to do anything with a child, like change the diapers. It was fulfilling and fun, and then I got to go home and sleep in my own bed." Adam is now dating someone new and doesn't think he would want to bring in a third. Colin is also dating someone new, and they've already had a few threesomes. "There probably is a reason through history that couples seem to end up in pairs," Colin says. "But there's a certain freedom in being able to make these decisions for yourself. I felt good that I got to decide it for myself." ■

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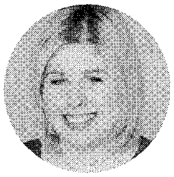
WOMEN

amlix

Looking for: A man

Age: 25



Occupation: Event planner-actress

Last great book I read: Nicholas Sparks's *A Walk to Remember.*

Most humbling moment: I've had many successes in life, but not quite that moment that would qualify as "humbling"—still waiting, I suppose . . .

Favorite on-screen sex scene: Hmmmm . . . I'm such a sucker for this movie—so I'd have to say the scene in *Dirty Dancing* when Baby loses her virginity to Johnny—very sexy scene . . .

Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: I guess it can count as best or worst—the time I lied about having the stomach flu for a week so I didn't have to have sex with my ex-boyfriend—I was trying to figure out a way to break up with him at the time—without being hurtful.

The five items I can't live without: My CD player (or stereo). My CD collection (music is very important to me). My cell phone. My computer. My day planner (my life is so chaotic lately, I can't remember my appointments anymore).

Fill in the blanks: A pair of bedroom eyes is sexy; a flair of innocence is sexier.

In my bedroom, you'll find: Ummm—don't you think that's a little personal? Let's get to know one another before I go sharing all of my secrets with ya!

brechtgirl

Looking for: A man

Age: 37

Occupation: Video writer

Last great book I read: *Yes, You ARE a Revolutionary.*

Most humbling moment: Now, in my room, considering sharing my most humbling moment with faceless strangers.

Favorite on-screen sex scene: *Vanilla Sky* (before it gets violent).

Celebrity I resemble most: Truman Capote.

Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: Yes, twice actually.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: Pink sand spot with green water and no crocs.

Song or album that puts me in the mood: Love Cats, Dirty Vegas, Gotan Project, Soldier of Midian, Moby, Emiliana Torrinni singing Jacques B, Radiohead.

The five items I can't live without: Kids, music, computer, paint, flowers.

Fill in the blanks: The Billy Nayer Show is sexy; real life is sexier.

In my bedroom, you'll find: A view of a tree with golden leaves, a tiny white horse, a huge bed with pale violet sheets, a tuberose candle that costs $26, a Japanese boy, French poetry, a mess of vintage belts, and a pair of vinyl boots on the floor by the wrought-iron mirror.

Why you should get to know me: I will never bore you.

More about who I'm looking for: The dark, sweet electric chemistry of disaster—without the disaster.

lulabula

Looking for: A man

Age: 34

Occupation: Producer

Last great book I read: *Me Talk Pretty One Day* (David Sedaris just gets it).

Most humbling moment: Jumping out of an airplane.

Favorite on-screen sex scene: The table scene in *The Postman Always Rings Twice.* Ouch.

Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: It's not you, it's me.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: Back in bungalow #7 at the Bounty bungalows in Thailand.

Song or album that puts me in the mood: Morcheeba, Travis, Radiohead, Kruder & Dorfmeister, and, of course, Al Green.

The five items I can't live without: I traveled around the world for a year with virtually nothing. Don't really need much . . . passport, credit card, flip-flops.

Fill in the blanks: A kiss on the hand is sexy; a kiss on the toes is sexier.

Why you should get to know me: I'm a sarcastic, playful, downtown girl with a big heart and a big smile.

More about who I'm looking for: I'm looking for man (not a boy) who is sexy, confident, kind, and a goofball. Someone who will make me laugh and will also keep me warm through the winter.

pinochet

Looking for: Either

Age: 28

Occupation: Mad scientist

Last great book I read: I'm assuming that no one wants a summation of my bookshelf. Let's try a little honesty: *Dermatologic Manifestations of Systemic Disease in the Pediatric Population.* Don't ask . . . it was only great for the pictures.

Most humbling moment: In high-school phys ed, when the girl with no arms and no legs was picked before me for a volleyball team . . . then she scored against me . . .

Favorite on-screen sex scene: I've had minimal experience here. I've only made it as far as the back of the theater.

Celebrity I resemble most: Perhaps if I make it to the front of the theater, I can come up with an appropriate answer to this . . .

Song or album that puts me in the mood: I seem to be getting lucky with Eliot Smith of late. Last month it was Mingus. Who can predict the favor of the crowd?

Fill in the blanks: Freud is sexy; Freudian slip is sexier.

Why you should get to know me:

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Sell myself, eh? I'm not sure I can do this without laughing. The last time I tried, I shook out my hair, put forth a shoulder, and leaned back on a table. Unfortunately, it had wheels. I'm smooth like that . . .

prodigal

Looking for: A man

Age: 32

Occupation: Attorney–aspiring writer

Last great book I read: *You Got Nothing Coming,* by Jimmy Lerner, the Harry Potter books (it's an inexplicable addiction now . . . I'm on the fourth book).

Most humbling moment: After my workout, I showered and changed, shoved my sweaty things into a gym bag which I carried with me to his place. We had drinks and dinner; I left—feeling good about everything. However, two days later, he still hadn't called. Finally, I phoned HIM. He was disgusted, wanted nothing to do with me. "What you did was low class." Shocked, I stammered, "What have I done?" (To be continued.)

Favorite on-screen sex scene: It's not really sex. It's the implication. Grace Kelly and Cary Grant in *To Catch a Thief*—when they're sitting on the sofa in her hotel room about to kiss, and the camera pans to the fireworks over the water, visible through the window behind them. It's simple, but I love it.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: At a lakeside cabin, one room, with a big fire, good books, my dogs, a person, snacks, and old scratchy jazz LPs. Or one of Bali's beautiful beaches, sipping something fruity and alcoholic and cold, preparing for my afternoon massage and musing over where I'll be dining—Gado Gado or the other place?

In my bedroom, you'll find: An oversized four-poster bed; vintage lamps; things in various shades of red; writing implements; watercolors, brushes, half-finished "projects"; mostly written letters; Pearl River's silk bed slippers; the Magical Almanac; an old fan; few regrets; poorly recorded scraps of dreams . . . I try to faithfully record my night musings.

siberiantit

Looking for: A man

Age: 26

Occupation: Bum

Last great book I read: *How to Repair Broken Toilets.*

Favorite on-screen sex scene: I don't care for this question either. Some of my favorite movies are: *Re-Animator, The Young Ones, UHF, The Dark Backward, The Brain That Wouldn't Die.*

Celebrity I resemble most: Dude from the TV series *The Crow.*

Song or album that puts me in the mood: Some of the bands I listen to are Kyuss, Suicidal Tendencies, Devo, Dr. Hook, Drifters.

The five items I can't live without: 2 tsp. sugar, 4 tbsp. olive oil, 1 can condensed milk, chilies, basil. I dunno what I would do with those ingredients, but it looks like something fun to make.

Fill in the blanks: A date is sexy; a prune is sexier.

In my bedroom, you'll find: An alligator.

More about who I'm looking for: A retard with blue ears. Of course being handsome helps. Does anybody read profiles? Note: I will not respond if you send perverted messages. Not interested in "play," either. I can't respond if you have no proper picture. Yeah, I know it's superficial, but most people just look at my picture and don't bother with anything else. Hey, I could be that fat chick you always were scared of.

thehourglass

Looking for: A man

Age: 31

Occupation: Pilates instructor–choreographer

Last great book I read: *The Anatomy Coloring Book.*

Most humbling moment: My first menstrual cycle.

Favorite on-screen sex scene: *Henry & June.*

Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: I'll be there in ten minutes. (I might be late, but I always show up.)

Song or album that puts me in the mood: Moods, not just "the" mood. Ryan Adams's "Heartbreaker"—terrifically melancholy. Biggie Smalls—aawwh yeah, uh, uh, uh. Duran Duran—never really got the credit they deserved. Magnetic Fields, the Stooges! Ryan Adams's "GOLD"—terribly annoying, Amon Tobin, Dusty Springfield, My Morning Jacket, MUM, Mo'Wax.

The five items I can't live without: 1. Laughing so hard my abs start to cramp. 2. Sleeping in. 3. Chocolate. 4. Sappo Hill oatmeal soap. 5. All of my shoes. 6. (Had to add) My digi cam.

Fill in the blanks: A smooth wooden floor is sexy; our clothes thrown onto a wooden floor is sexier.

alexena_now

Looking for: A man

Age: 48

Occupation: Writer

Last great book I read: *Pastoralia,* by George Saunders.

Most humbling moment: 1. Divorce after eleven years of marriage and a child. 2. Sept. 11.

Celebrity I resemble most: Myself.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: Curled up with a good novel.

The five items I can't live without: Books, CD and player, pen and notebook.

Fill in the blanks: John Cusack is sexy; Al Pacino is sexier.

In my bedroom, you'll find: Books, bathrobe, satin nightgown, alarm clock, *The Joy of Writing Sex.*

Why you should get to know me: I'm kind and a good listener. I also have a good sense of humor and a great sense of irony.

More about who I'm looking for: Not only single, breathing, and employed but warm and empathetic. Most of all, someone whose company I enjoy.

online & on air

THIS WEEK ON METROTV

maine_78

Best (or worst) lie I've ever old: I am tall (he-he).

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mermernyc

Looking for: a man

Age: 26

Occupation: Grad student

Last great book I read: *Confederacy of Dunces.*

Most humbling moment: Falling down in the middle of the street in broad daylight.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: Spain, Cuba, Costa Rica, Buenos Aires . . .

Song or album that puts me in the mood: Downtempo music.

The five items I can't live without: Sense of humor, good night's sleep, my mojo, jeans, New York *Post.*

Fill in the blanks: Being well-traveled is sexy; telling me about the places you've been is sexier.

In my bedroom, you'll find: A couch, a bed, some closets, a dresser . . . sorry I can't excite the pervs out there.

Why you should get to know me: Why not?

More about who I'm looking for: I am looking for someone who is honest, funny, attractive, and ambitious. If you think you possess those qualities, then drop me a line.

MEN

applepie

Looking for: A woman

Age: 36

Occupation: Legal administration

Last great book I read: *Moby-Dick.*

Most humbling moment: Being locked out of my apartment in my underwear.

Favorite on-screen sex scene: *Coming Home,* with Jane Fonda and John Voight.

Celebrity I resemble most: Dustin Hoffman.

Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: I'm related to the Dalai Lama.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: Kodiak, Alaska, fishing for halibut.

Song or album that puts me in the mood: Harry Connick Jr.

The five items I can't live without: Cereal, soap, phone, pen, paper.

Fill in the blanks: Lavender silk is sexy; your body in lavender silk is sexier.

In my bedroom, you'll find: A banjo, a stack of cookbooks, yoga manuals, my bike, the movie listings.

Why you should get to know me: I'll make you laugh, make you dinner, take you to exciting places, and make you feel incredible.

More about who I'm looking for: A sexy, intelligent, curious, and hungry woman.

frey

Looking for: A woman

Age: 31

Occupation: Architect-bar owner?

Last great book I read: *Species of Spaces* and *Other Pieces*—Georges Perec.

Most humbling moment: Sorting through my various humbling moments to choose a "most" is beginning to be its own little moment.

Favorite on-screen sex scene: Haven't had one yet.

Celebrity I resemble most: When you shave your head, you look a little like everyone else who does.

Song or album that puts me in the mood: Ween, Taj Mahal, Scientist, Skatalites, Willie Nelson, Tom Waits, NOFX, Nina Simone, Shane MacGowan.

In my bedroom, you'll find: Lots of windows and a great view.

Why you should get to know me: When life gives me lemons, I think, "Wow, lemons!"

More about who I'm looking for: Someone who winks.

cdb2002

Looking for: A woman

Age: 29

Occupation: Systems manager

Last great book I read: *Kingdom Come,* by Mark Waid and Alex Ross.

Most humbling moment: Realizing the vast scope of the universe and how minuscule my place is in it by comparison.

Celebrity I resemble most: None I can think of, but have been told I laugh like Eddie Murphy.

Best (or worst) lie I've ever told: Nothing comes to mind, but likely something to make someone feel better or alleviate a worry.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: I'd be with the right woman.

Song or album that puts me in the mood: Barry White's "Practice What You Preach." Or something with a good deep sultry beat to it. A good love song works, as well.

The five items I can't live without: Bed, computer, television, stereo, NYC pizza.

Fill in the blanks: Confidence is sexy; aggressiveness is sexier.

In my bedroom, you'll find: Large comfy queen-sized bed, 27-inch flat-screen TV and VCR. Computer, 5.1 speaker system, PlayStation 2.

ilikeparks

Looking for: A woman

Age: 28

Occupation: Media industry

Most humbling moment: 8th through 9th grade was one giant series of humbling moments—from the silly way I got extra money in 8th grade to the embarrassing stories I wrote in 9th grade.

If I could be anywhere at the moment: Outside. In a giant park eating, drinking, and partying with my friends.

Song or album that puts me in the mood: Yo la Tengo's "Electr-o-pura," but only if the circumstances are right. Otherwise, I just enjoy it.

The five items I can't live without: Digital camera, *Entertainment Weekly* subscription, postage stamps, my MetroCard, and my newly purchased Nivea for Men exfoliating facial scrub.

Fill in the blanks: A quiet brunch is sexy; a late-night drink in a dark bar is sexier.

In my bedroom, you'll find: The regular boy stuff (TV, VCR, PlayStation), a ponytail palm, and one or two drawers that hide all my secret possessions.

Why you should get to know me: I'm friendly! And I don't get upset if I'm caught in the rain without an umbrella.

More about who I'm looking for: Someone who won't mind that I rarely carry an umbrella. And who doesn't mind spending a night or two each week at the local bar hanging out with various friends (mine or yours) talking about silly things—culture, movies, computers, etc.

huntswithlions

Looking for: A woman

Age: 33

Occupation: LMT

Last great book I read: *Green Eggs and Ham,* by Dr. Seuss.

Favorite on-screen sex scene: Did Kermit ever get with Miss Piggy?

If I could be anywhere at the moment: Hell, just briefly, to see if it is hot like most people think, or cold, like in *The Inferno* (hey, it says "anywhere").

The five items I can't live without: My computer, guitar, camera, pink elephants, and clean underwear.

Fill in the blanks: Grace Kelly is sexy; Ingrid Bergman is sexier.

In my bedroom, you'll find: A very expensive cherry-wood futon (which I got for a couple hundred bucks from a friend). An HDTV from Samsung. The smell of incense from India, my poster of the Fonz (just kidding), and a hardwood floor that I put down myself.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

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PLACES TO GO. PEOPLE TO MEET.

F
S
ames
6
Swing Lessons
8:30 pm
7
MOMA
1:00 pm
Touch Football
3:00 pm
Ping-pong & Pool
9:00 pm
13
Blue Man Group
8:00 pm
Bowling & Bars
9:00 pm
14
White Water Rafting
9:00 am
Brooklyn Museum
12:00 pm
Guided Hiking
2:00 pm
orkshop
20
Ski Trip Weekend
6:30 pm
21
Metropolitan Museum
3:00 pm
Bourbon Tasting
8:00 pm
e Justine
ch Volleyball
27
Salsa Dance Workshop
8:15 pm
28
Long Island Wineries
10:00 am
Rock Scrambling
10:00 am
Chelsea Galleries
2:00 pm

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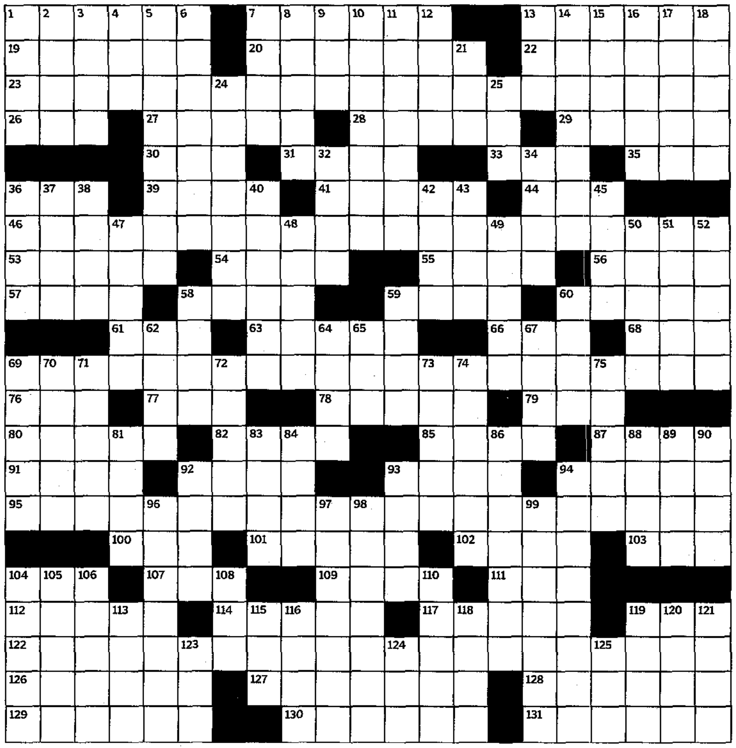
'A Posh Car for Christmas'

'Cue' Crossword by Maura B. Jacobson



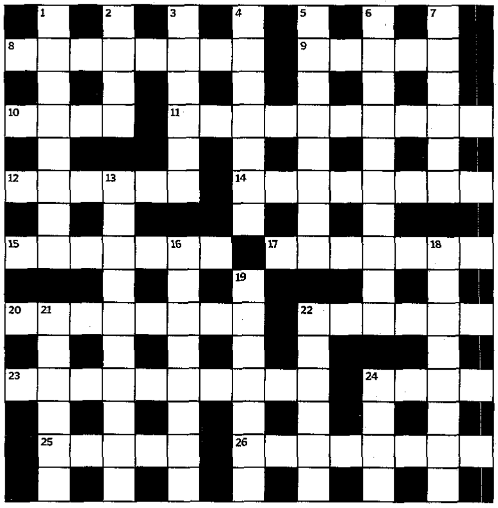
ACROSS

1 Part of B.M.O.C.
7 Inserted seasoning
13 Actress Mason
19 With hands on hips and elbows out
20 Neighbor of Syria
22 Ran off to the preacher
23 Introduction to this puzzle's verse
26 Gal of song
27 "—— I Get It" ("A Chorus Line" tune)
28 —— a customer
29 Capital of Switzerland
30 Darkrm. item
31 Beatles' meter maid
33 Underthing
35 For all time: poetic
36 "Thar —— blows!"
39 Mouse's lookout
41 Fathered
44 Org. for docs
46 Verse II: The proposition
53 See eye to eye
54 Wrongdoing, in legal parlance
55 Torture device
56 Bagel's middle
57 Come pouring down
58 "—— the perilous fight"
59 Mongolian desert
60 Ore core
61 Mr. Kettle, and others
63 "I Left My Heart —— Francisco"
66 Teachers' gp.
68 Summer, to Simone
69 Verse III: Proposition continued
76 Car of the '20s
77 Geologic time span
78 Up and about
79 Road guide
80 Many Muslims
82 Impose, as a tax
85 Goats' vocabulary
87 Give the once-over
91 "Damn Yankees" temptress
92 Away from the wind, at sea
93 German capital after WW II
94 Made a gaffe
95 Verse IV: Proposition continued
100 Wallet smallie
101 Pizza portion
102 "This won't hurt ——"
103 For what reason
104 Channel 2, in N.Y.
107 America's monogram
109 Letterman's rival
111 Suffix with ethyl
112 Latvians
114 Oregano shelfmate
117 Astronaut's milieu
119 G.I. mail drop
122 End of the verse: The clincher
126 Architectural column
127 Zeus, et al.
128 Staggered dizzily
129 With "Dan," a rock duo
130 Trattoria staples
131 Ford flops

DOWN

1 Put-downs from Scrooge
2 Scandinavian furnishings company
3 Future woman
4 Monsieur's wife: abbr.
5 Potent licorice-flavor liqueur
6 Not in any place
7 Openhanded blow
8 The pumpkin eater
9 Tech biggie
10 Neck artery
11 Catch by trickery
12 Medicine amount
13 Encountered
14 Where to find Selma
15 Pasadena's Bowl
16 Tire in the trunk
17 Compeer of Goethe
18 "Puff" snake
21 "Unforgettable" Cole
24 "The Rake's Progress" painter
25 British dandy
32 "Say It —— So"
34 File's go-with
36 Tiff
37 Enormous
38 To be, in Toulon
40 Illinois city
42 Eliel Saarinen's son
43 Lackluster
45 1975 Wimbledon winner
47 Music speed
48 Satiric twist
49 Best part of a cupcake
50 Bellhop's workplace
51 Bring joy to
52 Crossed out by an editor
58 Pre-Soviet ruler
59 Mosquito's kin
60 Writer Angelou
62 Inspires wonderment
64 Remain
65 Sounds of relief
67 Trees in an O'Neill title
69 "The flowers that bloom in the spring, ——"
70 Long-legged wading bird
71 Willy Wonka creator Dahl
72 Half a Washington city
73 Shakespearean Athenian
74 Muse of astronomy
75 Athletic activity
81 Cleanser brand
83 Lampreys
84 One of Salome's seven
86 Aardvark
88 Sprouted
89 Rachel's sister
90 Water swirl
92 Two of these make a sailor's 125-Down
93 Très ——
94 Highly regarded
96 Out of the ordinary
97 Citizen army
98 Leopardlike wildcats
99 Heartfelt
104 Paper fasteners
105 Seem suitable
106 Fashion
108 "The —— Daba Honeymoon"
110 Actor Milo of "Barbarella"
113 Enameled tinware
115 Most-used conjunction
116 Big first for baby
118 Head-'em-off site
119 Partner of ready and willing
120 Marmalade ingredient
121 Bookie's quote
123 Dryly humorous
124 Grab a chair
125 Positive reply

The 'Guardian' Crossword Set by Gordius



ACROSS

8 A protein not naturally used by 16. (8)
9 If the last were to be first, it wouldn't be one of them. (5)
10 One could be ill lacking heart. (4)
11 Paper heads new plan that goes all awry. (4-6)
12 Row about Dr. Wood. (6)
14 Gamble first salary away, so dip into the till. (8)
15 Old king kept a hold on the state. (7)
17 A month of rest—it comes to us all. (7)
20 Old queen, one reportedly held up in Oz . . . (8)
22 . . . rejecting role as viceroy. (6)
23 Firm short in capital is having to make concessions. (10)
24 There are piles of it in the sea. (4)
25 Turner has ill health endlessly. (5)
26 Purchase large dress for girl to wear. (8)

DOWN

1 Upright reputation. (8)
2 Type found in church. (4)
3 Fish found in bed? (6)
4 New looks current among clergy. (7)
5 Dicky is clever—this calls for response. (8)
6 Get colour back with sickness, losing track. (10)
7 State hearing is beyond doubt. (6)
13 The way, they say, to the altar? (6,4)
16 Rope is no solution for such as Crippen. (8)
18 Rummage in the bin, namely, to get one's own back. (8)
19 One called out for a softener. (7)
21 Aimlessly draw benefit after swallowing overdose. (6)
22 Stuff to be set out the night before ¿ (6)
24 . . . function: not unknown to leave. (4)

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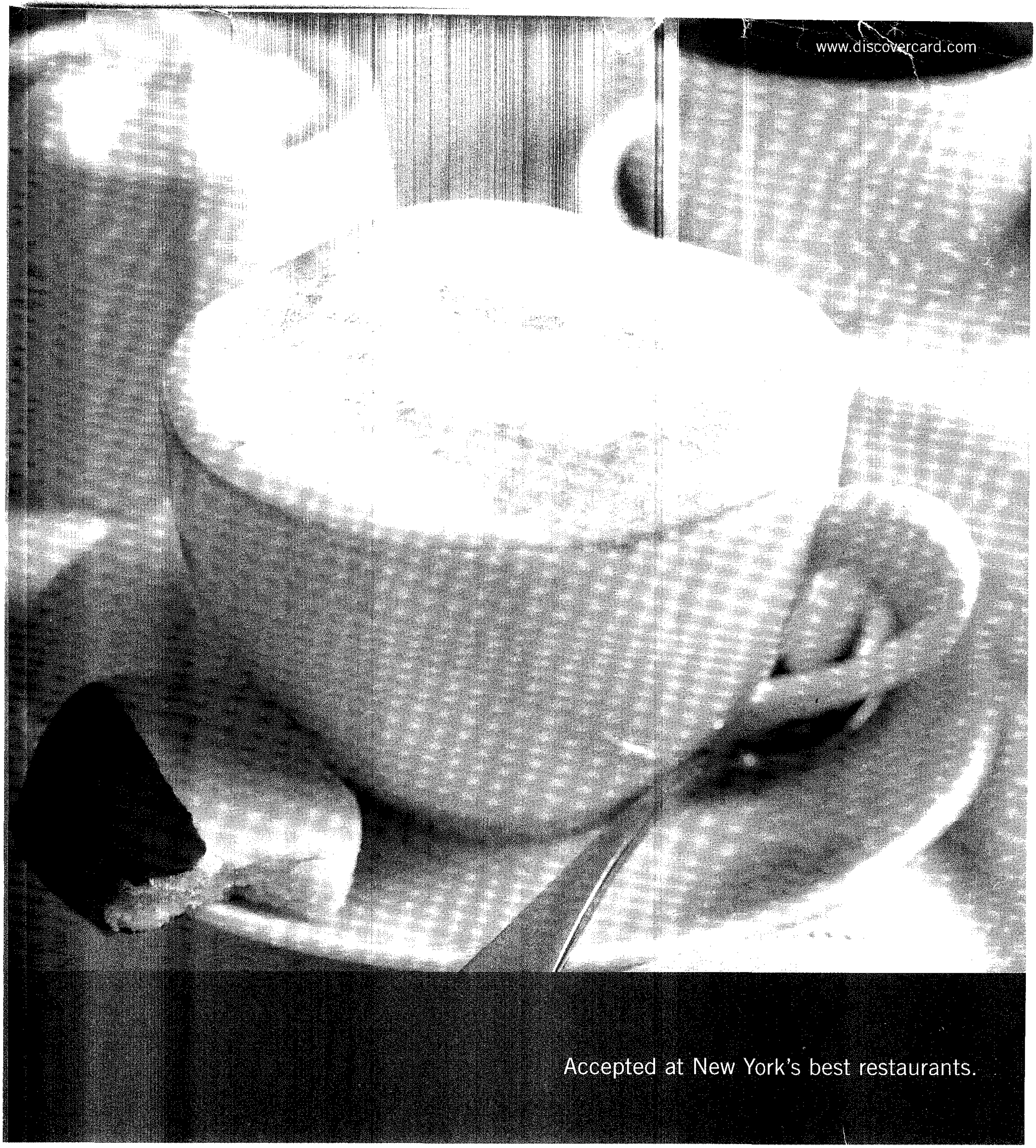
SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES APPEAR ON PAGE 156.



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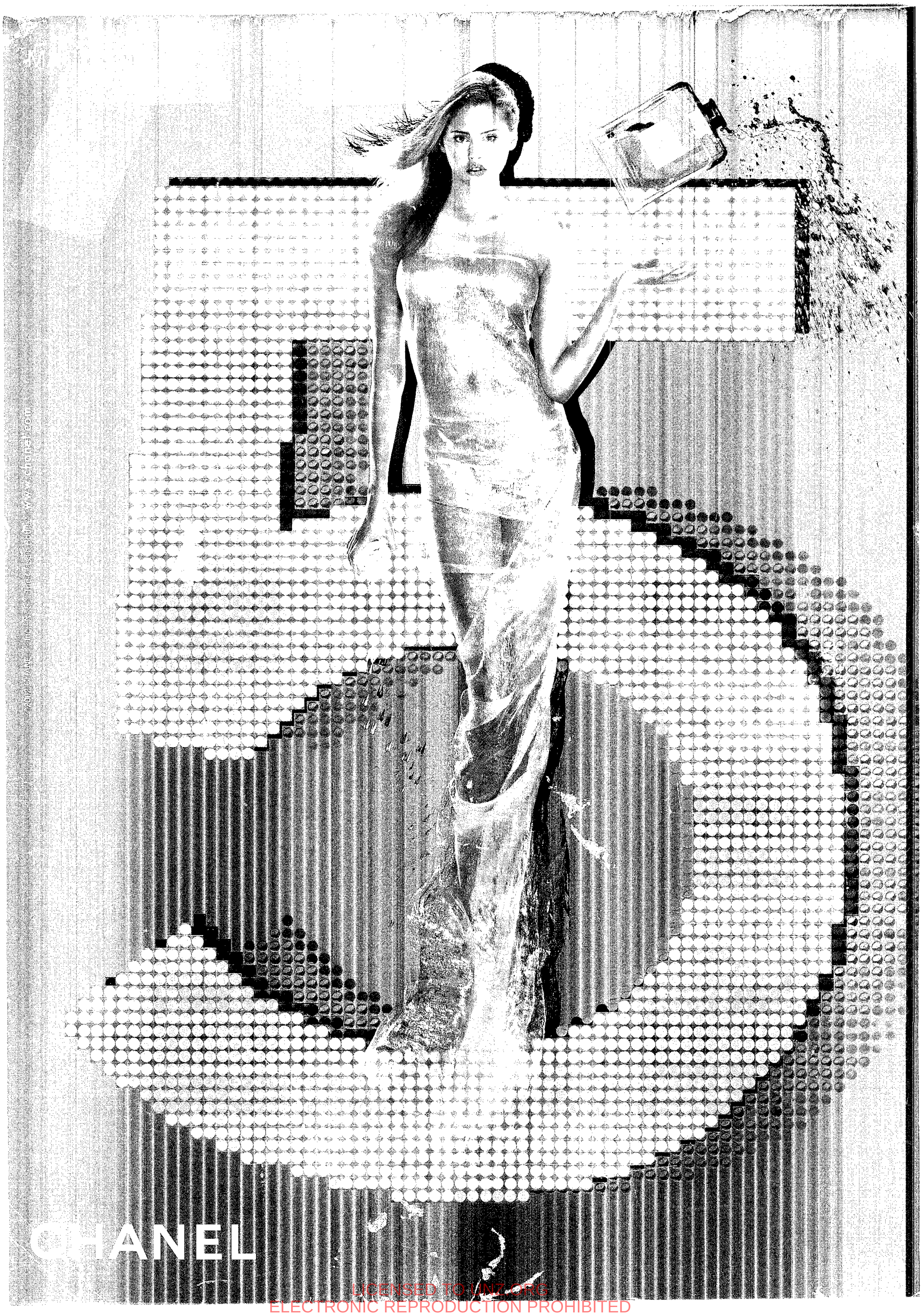

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